

243 222

SIMPLE STORY.

I N

FOUR VOLUMES.

By MRS. INCHBALD.



VOL. II.

LONDON:

Printed for G. G. J. and J. ROBINSON,
Paternoster Row.

M,DCC,XCI.

SIMPLE STORY.

SIMPLE STORY.

FOUR VOLUMES.

WILLIAM CHURCHILL & CO. LTD.



WHEAT
But the thought of the most altered
place the ever had—the was mistaken—
it was the herald who was changed.

The walks were melancholy, the
company unkind, the ball-room fatigue
ing—in time, the ball left behind;
that could charm or please her.

vol. 11. — 1871.

SIMPLE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN AGG. Miller arrived at Bath, she thought it the most disagreeable place she ever saw.—she was mistaken—it was she herself, who was changed.

The walks were melancholy, the company insipid, the ball-room fatiguing—in fine, she had left behind, all that could charm or please her.

Though she found herself far less happy than when she was at Bath before, yet she felt, she would not, to enjoy all that past happiness, be again reduced to the being she was at that time. Thus, does the lover consider the extinction of his passion, with the same horror as the libertine looks upon annihilation; the one would rather live hereafter (though in all the tortures with which his future state is described) than cease to exist; so there are no tortures a lover would not suffer, rather than cease to love.

In the wide prospect of melancholy before her, Miss Milner's fancy caught hold of the only comfort which presented itself; and this, slender as it was, in the total absence of every other, her imagination pictured as excessive. The
comfort

comfort was a letter from Miss Woodley—a letter wherein the subject of her love would most assuredly be mentioned, and in whatever terms, must still be the means of delight.

A letter arrived—she devoured it with her eyes.—The post mark on the outside denoting from whence it came, the name of “Milner Lodge” written on the top, were all sources of pleasure—and she read slowly every line it contained to procrastinate the pleasing expectation she enjoyed, till she should arrive at the name of Dorrisforth. At last her impatient eye, caught the word three lines beyond the place she was reading—irresistibly, she skipped over those lines, and fixed on the point to which she was attracted.

40 A SIMPLE STORY.

Miss Woodley was cautious in her indulgence; she made the slightest mention of Dorrisforth, saying only, "He was extremely concerned, and even dejected, at the little hope there was of his cousin, lord Elmwood's, recovery."—Short and trivial as this passage was, it was still more important to Miss Milner than any other in the letter—she read it again and again, considered, and reflected upon it.—Dejected, thought she, what does that word exactly mean?—did I ever see Mr. Dorrisforth dejected?—how I wonder does he look in that state?—Thus did she muse, while the cause of his dejection, though a most serious one, and pathetically described by Miss Woodley, scarce arrested her attention once.—She run over with haste the account of lord Elmwood's state

state of health; she certainly pitied him while she thought of him, but she did not think of him long. To die was a hard fate for a young nobleman just in possession of his immense fortune, and on the eve of marriage with a beautiful young woman; but Miss Milner thought Heaven might be still better than all this, and she had no doubt but his lordship would go there. The forlorn state of Miss Fenton ought to have been a subject for compassion, but she knew that lady had resignation to bear any lot with patience, and that a trial of her fortitude, might be more flattering to her vanity than to be countess of Elmwood: in a word, she saw nobody's misfortunes equal to her own, because she saw no one so little able to bear misfortune.

B 3

She

She replied to Miss Woodley's letter, and dwelt very long on that subject which Miss Woodley had taken care to pass over lightly; this was another indulgence; and to hear from, and to write to her friend, were now the only enjoyments she possessed. From Bath Miss Milner paid several festive visits with lady Luneham — all were alike tedious and melancholy.

But her guardian wrote to her, and though the subject was sorrowful, the letter gave her joy—the sentiments it expressed were but trite and common-place, yet she valued them as the dearest effusions of friendship and affection, and her hand trembled, and her heart beat with rapture while she wrote the answer, though she knew it would

not be received with one emotion, such as those which she experienced. In her second letter to Miss Woodley she prayed like a person insane to be taken home from confinement, and like a lunatic protested, in sensible language, she "had no disorder." But her friend replied, "that very declaration proves its violence." And assured her that nothing less than placing her affections elsewhere, should induce her to believe, but that she was incurable.

Miss Woodley's third letter acquainted Miss Milner with the death of Lord Elmwood—Miss Woodley was exceedingly affected by this event, and said little else on any other subject.—Miss Milner was shocked when she read the words "he is dead," and for a moment thought,

"How transient are all sublunary things!—within a few years I shall be dead—and how felicitous will it then be, if I have resisted every temptation to the delusive pleasures of this life!"—The happiness of a peaceful death occupied her contemplation for near an hour; but at length every virtuous and pious sentiment this meditation inspired, served but to remind her of the many sentences she had heard fall from her guardian's lips upon the same subject—her thoughts were again fixed on him, and she could think of nothing beside.

In a very short time after, her health became impaired from the indisposition of her mind; she languished, and was once in imminent danger. During a slight delirium of her fever, Miss Woodley's

Woodley's name and her guardian's were repeated incessantly; lady Lunham sent them immediate word of this, and they both hastened to Bath, and arrived there, just as her disorder had taken a most favourable turn. As soon as she became perfectly recollected, her first care was, knowing the frailty of her heart, to enquire what she had uttered while delirious.—Miss Woodley, who was by her bed-side, begged her not to be alarmed on that account, and assured her she knew, from all her attendants, that she had only spoken with a friendly remembrance (as was really the case) of those persons who were dear to her.

She wished to know whether her guardian was come to see her, but she had not the courage to ask before Miss Woodley;

Woodley; and her friend was afraid by the too sudden mention of his name to discompose her. Her woman, however, after some little time, entered the chamber and whispered Miss Woodley. Miss Milner asked inquisitively, "What she said?" and the woman going to her, replied softly, "Lord Elmwood, madam, would wish to come and see you for a few moments, if you will allow him?" Miss Milner turned her head, and stared wildly.

"I thought," said she, "I thought lord Elmwood had been dead—are my senses disordered still?"

"No, my dear," answered Miss Woodley, "it is the present lord Elmwood who wishes to see you; he whom you left ill when you came hither, is dead."

"And

"And who is the present lord Elmwood?" She asked.

Miss Woodley after a short hesitation replied—"Your guardian."

"And so he is," cried Miss Milner, "he is the next heir—I had forgot.—But is it possible he is here?"

"Yes—" returned Miss Woodley with a grave voice and manner, to moderate that glow of satisfaction which for a moment sparkled even in her languid eye, and blushed over her pallid countenance—"Yes—as he heard you were ill, he thought it right to come and see you."

"He is very good," Answered she, and the tears started in her eyes.

"Would you please to admit his Lordship?" Asked her woman.

"Not yet, not yet," she replied, "let me recollect myself first." And she

she looked with a timid doubt upon her friend, to ask if it was proper.

Miss Woodley could scarce support this humble reference to her judgment from the wan face of the poor invalid, and taking her by the hand, whispered in tears, "You shall do what you please."—In a few minutes lord Elmwood was introduced.

To those who sincerely love, every change of situation or circumstances in the object beloved, appears an advantage.—So, the acquisition of a title and estate, was in Miss Milner's eye an immeasurable advantage to her guardian, not on the score of their real value, but any change instead of diminishing her passion would have served but to increase it—even a change to the utmost poverty.

When

When he entered—the sight of him seemed to be too much for her, and after the first glance she turned her head away—the sound of his voice encouraged her, however, to look once more—and now she riveted her eyes upon him.

“It is impossible, my dear Miss Miller,” he gently whispered, “to say, the joy I feel that your disorder has subsided.”

But though it was impossible to say, it was possible to *look* what he felt, and his looks expressed his feelings.—In the zeal of those sensations, he laid hold of her hand, and held it between his—this he himself did not know—but she did.

“You have prayed for me, my lord, I dare say?” Said she, with a smile of thanks for those prayers.

“Fer-

"Fervently, ardently!"—Returned he, and the fervency with which he prayed, spoke in every feature.

"But I am a protestant, my lord, and if I had died such, do you believe I should have gone to Heaven?"

"Most assuredly, that would not have prevented you."

"But Mr. Sandford does not think so."

"He must; for he means to go there himself."

To keep her guardian with her, Miss Milner seemed inclined to converse; but Miss Woodley perceived the temporal as well as the spiritual evil of this, and advised his lordship to retire.

They had only one more interview before he left the place; at which Miss Milner was capable of sitting up—he
was

was with her, however, but a very short time, some necessary concerns relative to the late lord Elmwood's affairs, calling him in haste to London. Miss Woodley continued with her friend till she saw her entirely reinstated in her health: during which time his lordship was frequently the subject of their private conversation; and upon those occasions Miss Milner has sometimes brought Miss Woodley to acknowledge, "That could Mr. Dorrisforth have foreseen the early death of the late lord Elmwood, it had been for the greater honour of his religion (considering that ancient title would now after him become extinct), had he preferred marriage vows, to those of celibacy."

CHAPTER II.

WHEN the time for Miss Woodley to depart arrived, Miss Milner entreated earnestly to accompany her home, and made the most solemn promises that she would guard not only her behaviour, but her very thoughts within the limitation her friend should prescribe. Miss Woodley at length yielded thus much, "That as soon as lord Elmwood was set out on his journey to Italy, where she had heard him say he should shortly be obliged to go, she would no longer deny her the pleasure of returning; and if (after the long absence which must consequently take place between him and her) she should then, positively affirm the suppression of
her

her passion was the happy result, she would at that time take her word, and risk the danger of their once more residing together."

With this concession on the side of Miss Woodley they parted; and as winter was now far advanced, that lady returned to her aunt's house in town, from whence Mrs. Horton was, however, preparing to remove, in order to superintend lord Elmwood's house, (which had been occupied by the late earl,) in Grosvenor-square; and Miss Woodley was to accompany her.

If lord Elmwood was not desirous Miss Milner should conclude her visit and return to his protection, it was partly from the multiplicity of affairs in which

he was at this time engaged, and partly from having Mr. Sandford now entirely placed with him as his chaplain; for he dreaded that living in the same house their natural antipathy might be increased to aversion—upon this account he once thought of advising Mr. Sandford to take up his abode elsewhere; but the great pleasure his lordship took in his society, joined to the great mortification he knew such a proposal would be to his friend, would not suffer him to make it.

Miss Milner all this time was not thinking upon those she hated, but on those she loved.—Sandford never came into her thoughts, while the image of lord Elmwood never left them. One morning, as she sat talking to lady Luncheon on various subjects, but
thinking

thinking alone on him; Sir Harry, with another gentleman, a Mr. Fleetmond, came in, and the conversation turned upon the great improbability there was, during the present lord Elmwood's youth, that he should ever inherit the title and estate that had now fallen to him—and said Mr. Fleetmond, “Independent of the fortune, it must be matter of infinite joy to Dorriforth.”—“No,” answered Sir Harry, “independent of the fortune, it must be a motive of concern to him; for he must now regret, beyond measure, his folly in taking priest's orders—thus depriving himself of the hopes of an heir, by which the title, at his death, will be lost.”

“By no means,” replied Mr. Fleetmond, “he may yet have an heir, for he will certainly marry.”

"Marry!" Cried Sir Harry.

"Yes," answered the other, "it was that I meant by the joy it might probably give him, beyond the possession of his estate and title."

"How be married?" said lady Luneham, "Has he not taken a vow never to marry?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Fleetmond, "but there are no religious vows, from which the great Pontiff of Rome cannot grant a dispensation—those commandments made by the church, the church has always the power to dispense withal; and when it is for the general good of religion, his holiness thinks it incumbent on him, to publish his bull to remit all pains and penalties for their non-observance; and certainly it is for the honour of the catholics, that this earldom should continue in a catholic

tholic family—In short, I'll lay a wager my lord Elmwood is married within the twelvemonth."

Miss Milner, who listened with attention, feared she was in a dream, or deceived by the pretended knowledge of Mr. Fleetmond, who might know nothing—but on consideration, all that he had said was very probable; and to confirm its truth, he was himself a Roman Catholic, and must be well informed on the subject upon which he spoke.——If she had heard the direst news that ever sounded in the ears of the most susceptible of mortals, the agitation of her mind and person could not have been stronger—she felt, while every word was speaking, a chill through all her veins—it was a pleasure too exquisite, not to bear along with it the

sensation of exquisite pain; of which she was so sensible, that for a few moments it caused her to wish she had not heard the intelligence; though, very soon after, she would not but have heard it for the world.

As soon as she had recovered from her first astonishment and joy, she wrote to Miss Woodley an exact account of what she had heard, and received this answer,

“ I am sorry any body should have
“ given you this piece of information,
“ because it was a task, in the executing
“ of which, I had promised myself the
“ most extreme satisfaction—but the fear
“ your health was not sufficiently return-
“ ed to support, without danger, the
“ burthen of hopes which I knew would,
“ upon

“upon this occasion, press upon you, I
“deferred my pleasing communication,
“and have had it anticipated. Yet, as
“you seem in the utmost doubt as to
“the truth of what you have been told,
“perhaps this confirmation of it, may
“fall little short of the first news; es-
“pecially when it is strengthened by my
“entreating you to come to us, as soon
“as you can with propriety leave lady
“Luncheon.

“Come, my dear Miss Milner, and
“find in your once rigid monitor, a
“faithful confidant — I will no longer
“threaten to disclose a secret you have
“trusted me with, but leave it to the
“wisdom and sensibility of his heart,
“(who is now to penetrate into the hearts
“of our sex, in search of one consonant
“to his own) to find it out. — I no longer
“condemn, but congratulate you on
“your

"your passion; and will assist you with
"all my advice and earnest wishes, that
"you may obtain a return."

This letter was another of those excruciating pleasures, that nearly reduced Miss Milner to the grave—it took away from her all appetite to food, and from her eyes the power of being closed for several nights—she thought so much upon the prospect of accomplishing her wishes, that she could think of nothing beside; not even invent a probable excuse for leaving lady Luneham before the appointed time, which was yet two months to come. She wrote to Miss Woodley to beg her contrivance, to reproach her for keeping the secret so long from her, and to thank her for having revealed it to her in so kind a manner at last.—She begged also to be acquainted

acquainted how Mr. Dorrisforth (for still she called him by that name) spoke and thought of this sudden change in his destiny.

Miss Woodley's reply was a summons for her to town upon some pretended business, which she avoided explaining, but which entirely silenced her ladyship's entreaties for her stay.

To her question concerning lord Elmwood she answered, "It is a subject on which he seldom speaks—he appears just the same he ever did, nor could you by any part of his conduct, conceive that any such change had taken place." Miss Milner exclaimed to herself, "I am glad he is not altered—if his words, looks, or manners were any thing different from what they formerly were, I should not like him so well." And just the reverse would have been

been the case, had Miss Woodley sent her word he was changed. The day for her leaving Bath was fixed; she expected it with rapture, but before its arrival sunk under the care of expectation; and when it came, was so much indisposed as to be forced to defer her journey for a week.

At length she found herself in London—in the house of her guardian—and that guardian no longer bound to a single life, but *enjoined* to marry. He appeared in her eyes, as in Miss Woodley's, the same as ever; or perhaps more endearing than ever, as it was the first time she had beheld him with hope. —Mr. Sandford did *not* appear the same; yet he was in reality as surly and as disrespectful in his behaviour to her as usual; but she did not observe, or
she

she did not feel his morose temper as heretofore—he seemed amiable, mild, and gentle; at least such was the happy medium through which she saw him now; for good humour, like the jaundice, makes every one of its own complexion.

At length the young knight in armour—
 don—in the month of her guardian—and
 that guardian no longer bound to a
 single life, but upward to marry. He
 appeared in her eyes as in Miss Woot-
 ley's the same as ever, or perhaps
 more endearing than ever, as it was the
 first time she had beheld him with hope.
 —Mr. Sandford did not appear the
 same; yet he was as really as truly and
 as disinterested in his behaviour to her
 as usual, but she did not observe so

CHAPTER III.

LORD Elmwood was preparing to go abroad to receive in form, the dispensation from his vows; it was, however, a subject he seemed carefully to avoid speaking upon; and when by any accident he was obliged to mention it, it was without any marks either of satisfaction or concern.

Miss Milner's pride, for the first time, began to take the alarm—while he was Mr. Dorriforth, and confined to a single life, his indifference to her charms was rather an honourable, than a reproachful trait in his character, and in reality she admired him for the insensibility—but on the eve of being at liberty,

berty, and on the eve of making his choice, she was offended that choice was not immediately fixed upon her— She had been accustomed to receive the devotion of every man who saw her, and not to obtain it of the man from whom, of all others, she most wished it, was cruelly humiliating.—She complained to Miss Woodley, who advised her to have patience, but that was one of the virtues in which she was the least practised.

Encouraged, nevertheless, by her friend in the commendable desire of gaining the affections of him, who possessed all her's, she, however, left no means unattempted to make the conquest—but she began with too great certainty of success, not to be sensible of the deepest mortification in the disappointment—

may, she anticipated a disappointment, as she had before anticipated her success, and by turns felt the keenest emotions from hope and from despair.

As these passions alternately governed her, she was alternately in spirits or dejected; in good or in ill humour; and the frequent vicissitudes of her prospects, at length gave to her behaviour an air of capriciousness, which not all her follies had till now produced. — This was not the way to secure the affections of lord Elmwood; she knew it was not; and before him she was under some restriction. — Sandford observed this, and added to her many other failings, hypocrisy. It was plain to see Mr. Sandford esteemed her less and less every day; and as he was the person who most of all influenced the opinion of

of her guardian, he became to her, very soon, an object not merely of dislike, but of abhorrence.

These sentiments for each other, were discoverable in every word and action while they were in each others company; but still in his absence, Miss Milner's good nature, and little malice, never suffered her to utter a sentence injurious to his interest. — Sandford's charity did not extend thus far; and speaking of her with severity one evening while she was at the opera, "His meaning," as he said, "but to caution her guardian against her faults." Lord Elmwood replied,

"There is one fault, however, Mr. Sandford, I cannot lay to her charge."

"And what is that, my lord?" (cried Sandford, eagerly) "What is that one fault, which Miss Milner has not?"

"I never,"

"I never," replied his lordship, "heard Miss Milner, in your absence, utter a syllable to your disadvantage."

"She durst not, my lord, because she is in fear of you; and she knows you would not suffer it."

"She then," answered his lordship, "pays me a much higher compliment than you do; for you freely censure her, and yet imagine I will suffer it."

"My lord," replied Sandford, "I am undeceived now, and shall never take that liberty again."

As his lordship always treated Sandford with the utmost respect, he began to fear he had been deficient upon this occasion; and the disposition which had induced him to take his ward's part, was likely, in the end, to prove unfavourable to her; for perceiving Sandford

ford was offended at what had passed, as the only means of retribution, his lordship began himself to lament her volatile and capacious propensities; in which lamentation Sandford, now forgetting his affront, joined with the heartiest concurrence, adding, "That you Sir having now other cares to employ your thoughts, ought to insist upon her marrying, or her retiring wholly into the country."

She returned home just as this conversation was finished, and Sandford the moment she entered rung for his candle to retire. Miss Woodley, who had been at the opera with Miss Milner, cried,

"Bless me, Mr. Sandford, are you not well; you are going to leave us so early?"

VOL. II.

D

He

He replied, "No, I have a pain in my head." Miss Milner, who never heard complaints without sympathy, rose immediately from her seat, saying, "I think I never heard you, Mr. Sandford, complain of indisposition before—will you accept of my specifick for the head-ach? indeed it is a certain relief—I'll fetch it instantly."

She went hastily out of the room, and returned with a bottle, which, she assured him, "was a present from lady Luncheon, and would certainly cure him." And she pressed it upon him with such an anxious earnestness, that with all his churlishness he could not refuse taking it.

This was but a common-place civility, such as is paid by one enemy to another every day; but the manner was the material part—the unaffected

affected concern, the attention, the good will, she demonstrated in this little incident, was that which was remarkable; and which immediately took from lord Elmwood the displeasure to which he had been just before excited, or rather transformed it into a degree of admiration. Even Sandford was not insensible to her behaviour, and in return, when he left the room, "wished her a good night."

To her and to Miss Woodley, who had not been witnesses of the preceding conversation, what she had done appeared of no merit, but to the mind of lord Elmwood it had much; and upon the departure of Sandford he began to be unusually cheerful. He first, reproached the ladies for not offering him a place in their box at the opera.

"Would you have gone, my lord?"
 Asked Miss Milner, highly delighted.
 "Certainly," returned he, "had you
 invited me."
 "Then from this day, my lord, I
 give you a general invitation: not shall
 any other company be admitted, but
 what you approve."

"I am very much obliged to you,"
 Answered his lordship.

"And you," continued she, "who
 have been only accustomed to church-
 music, will be more than any one,
 enchanted on hearing the soft, harmoni-
 ous sounds of love."

"What ravishing pleasures are you
 preparing for me?" returned he, "I
 know not whether my weak senses will
 be able to support them."

She had her eyes upon him as he
 spoke this, and discovered in his, which
 were

were fixed upon her, a sensibility unexpected—a kind of fascination, which enticed her to look on, while her eyelids fell involuntarily before its mighty force; and a thousand blushes crowded over her face.——He was struck with these sudden signals, hastily recalled his former countenance, and stooped the conversation.

Miss Woodley, who had been a silent observer for some time, now thought a word or two from her, would be acceptable rather than troublesome.

“And pray, my lord,” said she, “when do you go to France?”

“To Italy you mean,”—said he, “not at all—my superiors are very indulgent, & for they dispense with all my duties.—I thought, and meant, to have gone abroad, but as variety of concerns require my

presence in England, every necessary ceremony has taken place here.

"Then your lordship is no longer in orders?" Said Miss Woodley.

"No, they have been resigned these five days."

"My lord, I give you joy." Said Miss Milner.

He thanked her, but added with a sigh, "If I have given up content in search of joy, I shall probably be a loser by the venture."—Soon after this, he wished the ladies good night, and retired.

Happy as Miss Milner found herself in his company, she saw him leave the room with infinite satisfaction, because her heart was impatient to give a loose to its hopes on the bosom of Miss Woodley. — She bid Mrs. Horton immediately

immediately good night, and in her friend's apartment gave way to all the language of the tenderest passion, warm with the confidence of meeting its return. She described the sentiments she had read in lord Elmwood's looks, and though Miss Woodley had beheld them too, Miss Milner's fancy heightened every glance; and her construction became, by degrees, so extremely favourable to her own wishes, that had not her friend been present, and known in what measure to estimate those symptoms; she must infallibly have thought, by the joy to which they gave birth, his lordship had openly avowed a passion for her.

Miss Woodley, therefore, thought it ~~her~~ duty to allay those extracies, and represented to her, she might be deceived

in her hopes—or even supposing the lordship's inclinations tended towards her, there were yet great obstacles between them.—Would Sandford, who governed, or at least directed his almost every thought and purpose, not be consulted upon this? and if he was, on what, but the most romantic affection on the part of lord Elmwood, had Miss Milner to depend? and his lordship was not a man to be suspected of submitting to the excels of any passion. Indeed, did Miss Woodley argue, for fear her friend should be misled by her wishes, yet in her own mind she scarce harboured a doubt that any thing would thwart them.—The succeeding circumstance proved she was mistaken.

Another gentleman of family and fortune made overtures to Miss Milner;

and

A SIMPLE STORY.

21

and her guardian, so far from having his thoughts inclined towards her on his own account, pleaded this lover's cause even with more zeal, than he had formerly pleaded for Sir Edward and her Frederick; and thus at once destroyed all those plans of happiness poor Miss Milner had meditated.

In consequence, her melancholy humour was now predominant; and for several days she staid entirely at home, and yet was denied to all her visitors.

—Whether this arose from pure melancholy, or the still lingering hope of making her conquest, by that sedateness of manners she knew her guardian admired, perhaps she herself did not know.

—Be that as it may, lord Elmwood could not but observe this change, and

one

one morning thought fit to mention, and
applaud it.

Miss Woodley and she were working
together when he came into the room,
and after sitting several minutes, and
talking upon indifferent subjects, to
which his ward replied with a dejection
in her voice and manner—he said,

“Perhaps I am wrong, Miss Mil-
ner, but I have observed you are lately
grown more thoughtful than usual.”

She blushed, as she always did when
the subject was herself.—He continued,
“Your health appears perfectly restor-
ed, and yet you do not take delight in
your former recreations.”

“Are you sorry for that, my lord?”

“No, madam, I am extremely glad;
and I was going to congratulate you
upon the change—but give me leave to
enquire,

enquire, to what lucky accident we are to attribute this alteration?"

"Your lordship then thinks all my commendable deeds, arise from accident; and that I have no virtues of my own."

"Pardon me, Miss Milner, I think you have many." This he spoke emphatically; and the blood flowed to her face more than at first.

He resumed—"How can I doubt of a lady's virtues, when her countenance gives such evident proofs of them?—believe me, Miss Milner, that in the midst of your gayest follies; while you thus continue to blush, I shall reverence your internal sensations."

"Oh! my lord, did you know some of them, I am afraid you would think them unpardonable."

This

This was so much to the purpose, Miss Woodley found herself uneasy—but she needed not—Miss Milner loved too sincerely, to reveal it to the object.

His lordship answered,

“And did you, Miss Milner, know some of mine, you might think them equally unpardonable.”

She turned pale, and could no longer guide her needle in the fond transports of her heart the imagined, the sensations to which he alluded, was his love for her.—She was too much embarrassed to reply, and he continued,

“We have all a great deal to pardon in one another; and I know not whether the officious person who forces, even his good advice, is not as blamable as the obstinate one, who will not listen to it.—And now, having made a preface to excuse you, should you once

more

more, I refuse to give it. I will venture to give it, and I will not be so far from being right as to be so far from being right.

"My lord," returned she, "I have never yet refused to follow your advice, but where my own peace of mind was so nearly concerned, as to have made me culpable, I have complied."

"Well, my lady, I submit not your determinations; but I will never again oppose your inclination to remain single."

This sentence, as it excluded his further soliciting for himself, gave her the most plain, and she cast a glance of her eye, at him full of reproach. He did not observe it, but went on, as before.

"Continuing unmarried, it seems to have been your father's intention, you should continue under my immediate care, but as I mean for the future to reside chiefly in the country, answer me candidly,

candidly, do you think you could be happy there, for at least three parts of the year?"

"After a short hesitation, she replied, —"I have no objection."

"I am glad to hear it," he returned eagerly, "for it is my earnest desire to have you with me—your welfare is dear to me as my own; and were we apart, continual apprehensions would prey upon my mind."

The tear started in her eye, at the earnestness with which this was spoken; —he saw it, and to soften her still more with the sense of his esteem for her, he increased his earnestness while he said,

"If you will take the resolution to quit London for the time I mention, there shall be no means unemployed to make the country all you can wish—I shall insist upon Miss Woodley's accom-

“accompanying you; and it will not only be my study to form such a society as you may approve, but I am certain it will be likewise the study of lady Elmwood——”

He was going on, but as if a poniard had thrust her heart, she writhed under this unexpected stroke.

He saw her countenance change—he looked at her steadfastly.

It was not a common change from joy to sorrow, from content to uneasiness, which Miss Milner discovered—she felt, and she expressed anguish.—Lord Elmwood was alarmed and shocked.—

She did not weep, but she called Miss Woodley to come to her, with a voice that indicated a degree of agony.

“My lord,” (cried Miss Woodley, feeling his consternation, and trembling lest he should guess the secret), “My lord,

lord, Miss Milner has again deceived you; you must not take her from London—it is that, which is the cause of her uneasiness.”

He seemed more amazed still, and still more shocked at her duplicity than at her torture.—“Good Heaven,” exclaimed he, “how am I to accomplish her wishes? what am I to do? how can I judge, while she will not confide in me, but thus grossly deceives me?”

She leaned, pale as death, on the shoulder of Miss Woodley, her eyes fixed, with a seeming insensibility, to all that was said, while he continued, “Heaven is my witness, if I knew if I could conceive the means how to make her happy, I would sacrifice my own happiness to her’s.”

“My lord,” cried Miss Woodley with a smile, “perhaps I may call upon you hereafter, to fulfil your word.”

He was totally ignorant what she meant, nor had he leisure from the confusion of his thoughts to reflect upon her meaning; he nevertheless replied, with warmth, "Do—you will find I'll perform it.—Do—I will faithfully perform it."

Though Miss Milner was conscious this declaration could not, in delicacy, ever be brought against him; yet the fervent and solemn manner in which he made it, cheered her spirits; and as persons enjoy the reflection of having in their possession some valuable gem, although they are determined never to use it, so she upon this, was comforted and grew better.—She now lifted up her head from Miss Woodley, and leaned it on her hand as she sat by the side of a table—still she did not speak, but seemed overcome with sorrow.—

As her situation became, however, less alarming; her guardian's pity and affright began to take the colour of resentment; and though he did not say so, he was, and looked highly offended.

At this juncture Mr. Sandford entered.—On beholding the present party, it needed not his sagacity to see, at the first view, they were all uneasy; but instead of the sympathy this might have excited in some dispositions, Mr. Sandford, after casting a look at each of them, appeared in high spirits.

“You seem unhappy, my lord.” Said he, with a smile.

“You do *not*—Mr. Sandford.” Replied his lordship.

“No, my lord, nor would I, were I in your situation,”—returned he, “What should make a man of sense out of temper

per but a worthy object?"—And he looked at Miss Milner.

"There are no objects unworthy our care." Replied lord Elmwood.

"But there are objects on whom all care is fruitless, your lordship will allow."

"I never yet despaired of any one, Mr. Sandford."

"And yet there are persons, of whom it is presumption, to entertain hopes."—And he looked again at Miss Milner.

"Does your head ach, Miss Milner?" Asked Miss Woodley, seeing her hold it with her hand.

"Very much." Returned she.

"Mr. Sandford," said Miss Woodley, "Did you use all those drops Miss Milner gave you for a pain in the head?"

32 A SIMPLE STORY.

"Yes," answered he, "I did."—
But the question at that moment some-
what embarrassed him.

"And I hope you found benefit from
them." Said Miss Milner, with great
kindness, as she rose from her seat, and
walked slowly and despondently out of
the room.

Though Miss Weedley followed her,
so that Mr. Sandford was left alone with
lord Edmond, and might have conti-
nued his unkind insinuations without
any restraint; yet his lips were closed for
the present. He looked down on the
carpet—twitched himself upon his chair
—and began to talk of the weather.

CHAPTER IV.

AS soon as the first transports of despair were over, Miss Milner suffered herself to be once more in hope—the found there were no other means to support her life; and to her no small joy, her friend, Miss Woodley, was much less severe on the present occasion than she expected.—No engagement between mortals, was, in Miss Woodley's opinion, binding like that entered into with heaven; and whatever vows lord Elmwood had made to another, she justly supposed, no woman's love for him, equalled Miss Milner's—it was prior to all others too, and that established a claim, at least to contend for success; and in a

contention, what rival would not fall before her?

It was not difficult to guess who this rival was; or if they were a little time in suspense, Miss Woodley soon arrived at the certainty, by inquiring of Mr. Sandford; who, unsuspicious why she asked, readily informed her the intended lady Elmwood, was no other than Miss Fenton; and that her marriage with his lordship would be solemnized as soon as the mourning for the late lord Elmwood was expired.—This last intelligence made Miss Woodley shudder—however, she repeated it to Miss Milner, word for word.

“Happy! happy, woman!” exclaimed Miss Milner of Miss Fenton; “she has received the first fond impulses of his heart, and has had the transcendent

dent happiness of teaching him to love!"

"By no means," returned Miss Woodley, finding there was no other method to comfort her; "do not suppose lord Elmwood's marriage is the result of love—it is no more than a duty, a necessary piece of business, and this you may plainly see by the wife on whom he has fixed.—Miss Fenton was thought a proper match for his cousin, and this same propriety, you must perceive still exists."

It was easy to convince Miss Milner all her friend said was truth, for she wished it to be so. "And oh!" she exclaimed, "could I but stimulate passion, in the place of propriety——do you think my dear Miss Woodley," (and she looked with such begging eyes, it was impossible not to answer as she wished,) "do you

think it would be unjust to Miss Fenton, were I to inspire her destined husband with a passion which she may not have inspired, and which I believe she herself cannot feel?

Miss Woodley paused a minute, and then answered, "No;"—but there was a hesitation in her manner of delivery—she did say, "No," but she looked as if she was afraid she ought to have said "Yes."—Miss Milner, however, did not wait to give her time to recall the word, or to alter its meaning by adding others to it, but run on eagerly, and declared, "As that was her opinion, she would abide by it, and do all she could to supplant her rival."—In order, nevertheless, to justify this determination, and satisfy the conscience of Miss Woodley, they both concluded, Miss Fenton's heart was not engaged in the intended marriage,

marriage, and consequently she was indifferent whether it took place or not.

Since the death of the late earl, that young lady had not been in town; nor had the present lord been near the spot where she resided since the week her lover died; of course, nothing like love could be declared at so early a period; and if it had been made known since, it must only have been by letter, or by the deputation of Mr. Sandford, whom they knew had been once in the country to visit her; but how little he was qualified to enforce a tender passion, was a comfortable reflection.

Revived with these conjectures, of which some were true, and others false; the very next day a dark gloom overspread their bright prospects, on Mr.

Sandford's

Sandford's saying, as he entered the breakfast-room,

"Miss Fenton, ladies, desired me to present her compliments to you."

"Is she in town?" Asked Mrs. Horton.

"She came to town yesterday morning," returned Sandford, "and is at her brother's, in Ormond street; my lord and I supped there last night, and that made us so late home."

His lordship entered soon after, and confirmed what had been said, by bowing to his ward, and telling her, "Miss Fenton had charged him with her kindest respects."

"How does poor Miss Fenton look?" Mrs. Horton asked lord Elmwood.

To which question Sandford replied, "Beautiful—she looks beautifully."

"She

"She has got over her uneasiness, I suppose then?" Said Mrs. Horton—not knowing she was asking the question before her new lover.

"Uneasy!" replied Sandford, "uneasy at any trial this world can send? that had been highly unworthy of her."

"But sometimes women do fret at such things." Replied Mrs. Horton innocently.

Lord Elmwood asked Miss Milner—"If she meant to ride, this charming day?"

While she was hesitating—

"There are very different kind of women," (answered Sandford, directing his discourse to Mrs. Horton,) "there is as much difference between some women, as between good and evil spirits."

Lord

Lord Elmwood asked Miss Milner again—if she took an airing?

She replied, “No.”

“And beauty,” continued Sandford, “when endowed upon spirits that are evil, is a mark of their greater, their more extreme wickedness.—Lucifer was the most beautiful of all the angels in paradise——”

“How do you know?” said Miss Milner.

“But the beauty of Lucifer” (continued Sandford, in perfect neglect and contempt of her question,) “was an aggravation of his guilt; because it shewed a double share of ingratitude to the Divine Creator of that beauty.”

“Now you talk of angels,” said Miss Milner, “I wish I had wings; and I should like to fly through the park this morning.”

“You

"You would be taken for an angel in good earnest." Said lord Elmwood.

Sandford was angry at this little compliment, and cried, "Then instead of the wings, I would advise the serpent's skin."

"My lord," cried she, "does not Mr. Sandford use me ill?"—Vexed with other things, she felt herself extremely hurt at this, and made the appeal almost in tears.

"Indeed, I think he does." Answered his lordship, and he looked at Sandford as if he was displeased.

This was a triumph so agreeable to her, she immediately pardoned the offence; but the offender did not so easily pardon her.

"Good morning, ladies." Said his lordship, rising to go away.

"My lord," said Miss Woodley, "you promised Miss Milner to accompany
pany

pany her one evening to the opera; this is opera night."

"Will you go, my lord?" Asked Miss Milner, in a voice so soft, he seemed as if he wished, but could not resist it.

"I am to dine at Mr. Fenton's to-day," he replied, "and if he and his sister will go; and you will allow them part of your box, I will promise to come."

This was a condition that did not please her, but as she felt a strong desire to see him in the company of his intended bride, (for she fancied she could perceive his most secret sentiments, could she once see them together) she answered not ungraciously, "Yes, my compliments to Mr. and Miss Fenton, and I hope they will favour me with their company."

"Then,

"Then, madam, if they come, you may expect me—else not." And he bowed and left the room.

All the day was passed in anxious expectation by Miss Milner, what would be the event of the evening; for upon the skill of her penetration that evening, all her future prospects she thought depended.—If she saw by his looks, his words, or assiduity, he loved Miss Fenton, she flattered herself she would never think of him again with hope; but if she observed him treat her with inattention or indifference, she meant to cherish from that moment the fondest expectations.—Against that short evening her toilet was consulted the whole day; and the alternate hope and fear which fluttered at her heart, gave a more than usual brilliancy to her eyes, and more than usual

usual bloom to her complexion.—But in vain was her beauty; vain all the pains she had taken to decorate that beauty; vain the many looks she cast towards her box-door to see it open; lord Elmwood did not come.

The music was discord—every thing she saw, was disgusting—in a word, she was miserable.

She longed impatiently for the curtain to drop, because she was uneasy where she was—yet she asked herself, “Shall I be less unhappy at home? yes, at home I shall see lord Elmwood, and that will be happiness—but he will behold me with neglect, and that will be misery.—Ungrateful man! I will no longer think of him.” She said to herself.—Or could she have thought

5 of

of him without joining in the same idea Miss Fenton, her anguish had been supportable; but while she pictured them as lovers, the tortures of the rack give but a few degrees more pain than she endured.

There are but few persons who ever felt the real passion of jealousy, because few have felt the real passion of love; but to those who have experienced them both, jealousy not only affects the mind, but every fibre of the frame is a victim to it; and Miss Milner's every limb ached, with agonizing torment, while Miss Fenton, courted and beloved by Lord Elmwood, was present to her imagination.

The moment the opera was finished, she flew hastily down stairs, as if to fly

from the sufferings she experienced.— She did not go into the coffee-room, though repeatedly persuaded by Miss Woodley, but waited at the door till her carriage drew up.

Piqued — heart-broken — full of resentment to the object of her uneasiness, as she stood inattentive to all that passed, a hand gently laid hold of her's, and the most humble and insinuating voice said, "Will you permit me to hand you to your carriage?" She was awaked from her reverie, and found lord Frederick Lawnly by her side.— Her heart, just then melting with tenderness to another, was perhaps more accessible than heretofore, or bursting with resentment, thought this the moment to retaliate. Whatever passion reigned that instant, it was favourable

to

to the desires of lord Frederick, and she looked as if she was glad to see him; he beheld this with the rapture and the humility of a lover; and though she did not feel the slightest love in return, she felt a gratitude proportionate to the insensibility with which she had been treated by her guardian, and lord Frederick was not very erroneous if he mistook this gratitude for a latent spark of affection. The mistake, however, did not force from him his respect: he handed her to her carriage, bowed lowly, and disappeared. Miss Woodley wished to divert her thoughts from the object which could only make her wretched, and as they rode home, by many encomiums upon lord Frederick, endeavoured to incite her to a regard for him; Miss Milner was displeased at the attempt, and exclaimed,

"What, love a rake, a man of professed gallantry? impossible.—To me, a common rake is as odious, as a common prostitute is to a man of the nicest feelings.—Where can be the pride of inspiring a passion, fifty others can equally inspire? or the transport of bestowing favours, where the appetite is already cloyed by fruition of the self-same enjoyments?"

"Strange," cried Miss Woodley, "that you, who possess so many follies incident to your sex, should, in the disposal of your heart, have sentiments so contrary to women in general."

"My dear Miss Woodley," returned she, "put in competition the languid love of a debauchee, with the vivid affection of a sober man, and judge which has the dominion? Oh! in my calendar of love, a solemn lord chief justice,

A SIMPLE STORY.

69

or a devout archbishop, ranks before a
licentious king.

Miss Woodley smiled at an opinion
which she knew half her sex would
laugh at; but by the air of sincerity with
which it was delivered, she was con-
vinced, her late behaviour to lord Fre-
derick was but the mere effect of
chance.

Lord Elmwood's carriage drove to
his door just at the time her's did; Mr.
Sandford was with him, and they were
both come from passing the evening at
Mr. Fenton's.

"So, my lord," said Miss Woodley,
as soon as they met in the apartment,
"you did not come to us."

"No," answered his lordship, "I
was sorry; but I hope you did not ex-
pect me."

F 3

"Not

"Not expect you, my lord?" cried Miss Milner, "did not you say you would come?"

"If I had, I certainly should have come," returned he, "but I only said so conditionally."

"That I am witness to," cried Sandford, "for I was present at the time, and his lordship said it should depend upon Miss Fenton."

"And she, with her gloomy disposition," said Miss Milner, "chose to sit at home."

"Gloomy disposition?" repeated Sandford, "She is a young lady with a great share of sprightliness—and I think I never saw her in better spirits than she was this evening, my lord?"

Lord Elmwood did not speak.

"Bless me, Mr. Sandford," cried Miss Milner, "I meant no reflection upon

upon Miss Fenton's disposition; I only meant to censure her taste for staying at home."

"I think," replied Sandford, "a much greater censure should be passed upon those, who prefer rambling abroad."

"But I hope, ladies, my not coming," said his lordship, "was no cause of inconvenience to you; you had still a gentleman with you, or I should certainly have come."

"Oh! yes, two gentlemen." Answered the young son of lady Evans, a lad from school, whom Miss Milner had taken along with her, and to whom his lordship had alluded.

"What two?" Asked lord Elmwood.

Neither Miss Milner or Miss Woodley answered.

"You know, madam," said young Evans, "that handsome gentleman who handed you into your carriage, and you called my lord."

"Oh! he means lord Frederick Lawley." Said Miss Milner carelessly, but a blush of shame spread over her face.

"And did he hand you into your coach?" Asked his lordship, earnestly.

"By mere accident, my lord," Miss Woodley replied, "for the crowd was so great——"

"I think, my lord," said Sandford, "it was very lucky you were not there."

"Had lord Elmwood been with us, we should not have had occasion for the assistance of any other." Said Miss Milner.

"Lord

"Lord Elmwood has been with you, madam," returned Sandford, "very frequently, and yet——"

"Mr. Sandford," said his lordship, interrupting him, "it is near bed-time, your conversation keeps the ladies from retiring."

"Your lordship's does not," said Miss Milner, "for you say nothing."

"Because, madam, I am afraid to offend."

"But does not your lordship also hope to please? and without risking the one, it is impossible to arrive at the other."

"I think, at present, the risk of one would be too hazardous, and so I wish you a good night." And he went out of the room somewhat abruptly.

"Lord Elmwood," said Miss Milner, "is very grave—he does not look like

like a man who has been passing his evening with the woman he loves."

"Perhaps he is melancholy at parting from her," said Miss Woodley.

"More likely offended," said Sandford, at the manner in which that lady has spoken of her."

"Who, I?" cried Miss Milner, "I protest I said nothing but——"

"Nothing, madam? did not you say she was gloomy?"

"But, what I thought—I was going to add, Mr. Sandford."

"When you think unjustly, you should not express your thoughts."

"Then, perhaps, I should never speak."

"And it were better you did not, if what you say, is to give pain.—Do you know, madam, that my lord is going to be married to Miss Fenton?"

"Yes."

"Yes," answered Miss Milner.

"Do you know that he loves her?"

"No," answered Miss Milner.

"How, madam! do you suppose he does not?"

"I suppose he does, yet I don't know it."

"Then supposing he does, how can you have the imprudence to find fault with her before him?"

"I did not — to call her gloomy, was, I knew, to praise her both to him and to you, who admire such tempers."

"Whatever her temper is, *every one* admires it; and so far from its being what you have described, she has a great deal of vivacity; vivacity which proceeds from the heart."

"No, if it proceeded, I should admire it too; but it rests there, and no one is the better for it."

"Come,

"Come, Miss Milner," said Miss Woodley, "it is time to retire; you and Mr. Sandford must finish your dispute in the morning."

"Dispute, madam!" said Sandford, "I never disputed with any one beneath a doctor of divinity in my life.—I was only cautioning your friend not to make light of virtues, which it would do her honour to possess.—Miss Fenton is a most amiable young woman, and worthy just such a husband as my Lord Elmwood will make her."

"I am sure," said Miss Woodley, "Miss Milner thinks so—she has a high opinion of Miss Fenton—she was at present only jesting."

"But, madam, jests are very pernicious things, when delivered with a malignant sneer.—I have known a jest destroy a lady's reputation—I have
known

known a jest give one person a distaste for another—I have known a jest break off a marriage.

“But I suppose there is no apprehension of that, in the present case?” Said Miss Woodley—wishing he might answer in the affirmative.

“Not that I can foresee,” Replied he.—“No, Heaven forbid; for I look upon them to be formed for each other—their dispositions, their pursuits, their inclinations the same.—Their passions for each other just the same—pure—white as snow.”

“And I dare say, not warmer,” Replied Miss Milner.

He looked provoked beyond measure.

“Dear Miss Milner,” cried Miss Woodley, “how can you talk thus? I believe in my heart you are only envious

envious my lord did not offer himself to you."

"To her!" said Sandford, affecting an air of the utmost surprise, "to her? Do you think his lordship received a dispensation from his vows to become the husband of a coquette—a——" he was going on.

"Nay, Mr. Sandford," cried Miss Milner, "I believe my greatest crime in your eyes, is being a heretick."

"By no means, madam—it is the only circumstance that can apologize for your faults; and had you not that excuse, there would be none for you."

"Then, at present, there is an excuse—I thank you, Mr. Sandford; this is the kindest thing you ever said to me. But I am vext to see you are sorry, you have said it."

"Angry

"Angry at your being a heretick?" he resumed, "Indeed I should be much more concerned to see you a disgrace to our religion."

Miss Milner had not been in a good humour during the whole evening—she had been provoked to the full extent of her patience several times; but this harsh sentence hurried her beyond all bounds, and she arose from her seat in the most violent agitation, and exclaimed, "What have I done to be treated thus?"

Though Mr. Sandford was not a man easily intimidated, he was on this occasion evidently alarmed; and stared about him with so strong an expression of surprise, that it partook in some degree of fear.—Miss Woodley clasped her friend in her arms, and cried with the tenderest affection

fection and pity, "My dear Miss Milner, be composed."

Miss Milner sat down, and was so for a minute; but her dead silence was nearly as alarming to Sandford as her rage had been; and he did not perfectly recover himself till he saw a flood of tears pouring down her face; he then heaved a sigh of content that it had so ended, but in his heart resolved never to forget the ridiculous affright into which he had been put.—He stole out of the room without uttering a syllable—But as he never retired to rest before he had repeated a long form of evening prayers, so when he came to that part which supplicates "Grace for the wicked," he named Miss Milner's name, with the most fervent devotion.

A SIMPLE STORY.

CHAPTER V.

AMONG the many sleepless nights Miss Milner passed, the present was not one of them; it is true she had a weight of care upon her heart, even heavier than usual, but its burthen had overcome her strength, and wearied out with hopes, with fears, and at the end with disappointment and rage, she sunk into a profound slumber as soon as she was laid down—but the more forgetfulness had prevailed, the greater was the force of remembrance when she awoke—At first, so sound had her sleep been, she had a difficulty in calling to mind why she was unhappy; but that she was unhappy, she well recollected—and when the cause came to her me-

A SIMPLE STORY

memory, she would have slept again, but that was impossible.

Though her rest had been sound, it had not been refreshing; she was far from well, and sent word so as an apology for not being present at breakfast. Lord Elmwood looked concerned when the message was delivered; Mr. Sandford shook his head.

"Mrs. Milner's health is not good."

Said Mrs. Horton a few minutes after.

Lord Elmwood laid down the newspapers to attend to her.

"To me there is something very extraordinary about her." Continued Mrs. Horton, finding she had caught his lordship's attention.

"So there is to me." Added Sandford, with a sarcastic sneer.

"And

“And so there is to me,” said Miss Woodley, with a most serious face, and heartfelt sigh.

Lord Elmwood gazed by turns at each, as each delivered their sentiments; and when they were all silent, he looked bewildered, not knowing what judgment to form from any of these sentences.

Soon after breakfast, Mr. Sandford withdrew to his own apartment; Mrs. Horton in a little time went to her's, and Lord Elmwood and Miss Woodley were left alone.—His lordship immediately rose from his seat, and said, “I think, Miss Woodley, Miss Milner was extremely to blame, though I did not choose to tell her so before Mr. Sandford, in giving my lord Frederick an opportunity of speaking to her; un-

less she means he shall renew his addresses."

"That, I am sure, my lord," replied Miss Woodley, "she does not mean—and I assure you, my lord, seriously, it was by mere accident she saw him yesterday evening; or permitted him to attend her to her carriage."

"I am glad to hear it;" he returned quickly; "for although I am not of a suspicious nature, yet in regard to her affection for him, I cannot but have my doubts."

"You need have none, my lord." Replied Miss Woodley, with a smile of confidence.

"And yet you must own her behaviour has warranted them—has it not been in this particular incoherent, undefinable, unaccountable!"

"The

“The behaviour of a person in love, no doubt.” Said Miss Woodley.

“Don’t I say so?” replied he warmly, “And is not that a just reason for my suspicions?”

“But is there only one man in the world on whom these suspicions should fix?” Said Miss Woodley with the colour mounting into her face.

“Not that I know of—not one more that I know of.” Returned he, with astonishment at what she had insinuated, and yet with a perfect assurance she was in the wrong.

“Perhaps I am mistaken.” Replied she.

“Nay, that is impossible too—” returned he with anxiety, “You share her confidence; you are perpetually with her; and provided she did not confide



in you, you must know, must be acquainted with her inclinations."

"I believe I am *perfectly* acquainted with them." Replied Miss Woodley, with a significance in her voice and manner which convinced him there was some secret to learn.

After a hesitation;

"It is far from me," replied he, "to wish to be entrusted with the private sentiments of those who desire to withhold them from me, much less would I take any unfair means of being informed of them—to ask any more from you, I believe, would be unfair—yet I cannot but lament, that I am not as well informed as you are.—I wish to prove my friendship to Miss Milner, but she will not suffer me—and every step I take for her happiness, I take in the most perplexing uncertainty."

Miss

Miss Woodley sighed; but did not speak.—He seemed to wait for her reply, but as she made none, he proceeded.

“If ever a breach of confidence could be tolerated, I certainly know no occasion that would so justly authorise such a measure as the present.—I am not only proper from my character, but from my circumstances to be relied upon—my interest is so nearly connected with the interest, and my happiness with the happiness of my ward, that those principles as well as my honour, would protect her from every peril arising from my being trusted.”

“Oh! my lord,” cried Miss Woodley, with a most forcible accent, “you are the last person on earth, she would pardon me for intrusting.”

“Why so?” (said he warmly,) “But that is the way—the person who is our friend we misdoubt—where a common interest is concerned, we are ashamed of drawing on a common danger—Afraid of advice, though that advice is to save us. — Miss Woodley, said he, (changing his voice with excess of earnestness) do you believe that I would do any thing to make Miss Milner happy?”

“Any thing in honour, my lord.”

“She can desire nothing farther.”—

He replied in agitation—“Are her desires so unwarrantable I cannot grant them?”

Miss Woodley again did not speak—and he continued.

“Great as my friendship is, there are certainly bounds to it; bounds, that shall save her in spite of herself.”— And he raised his voice.

In

“ In the disposal of themselves,” resumed he, with a less vehement tone, “ that great, that terrifick disposal in marriage, (at which I have ever looked with affright and dismay) there is no accounting for the rashness of a woman’s choice, or sometimes for the depravity of her taste.— But in such a case, Miss Milner’s election of a husband shall not direct mine—if she does not know her own value, I do.— Independent of her fortune, she has beauty to captivate the heart of any man ; and with all her follies, she has a frankness in her manner, an unaffected wisdom in her thoughts, a vivacity in her conversation, and withal, a softness in her demeanour, that might alone engage the affections of a man of the nicest sentiments, and the strongest understanding.—I will not see all these qualities and accomplishments debased.
—It

—It is my office to protect her from the consequences of a degraded choice, and I will.”

“My lord, Miss Milner’s taste is not a depraved one; it is but too much refined.”

“What do you mean by that, Miss Woodley? you talk mysteriously.—Is she not afraid I will thwart her inclinations?”

“She is sure you will, my lord.”

“Then must not the person be unworthy of her?”

Miss Woodley rose from her seat, the tears trickled down her cheeks, she clasped her hands, and every look, every gesture proved her alternate resolution, and irresolution of proceeding farther.—Lord Elmwood’s attention was arrested before, but now it was fixed

ed

ed to a degree, which her manner could only occasion.

“ My lord,” said she, with a tremulous voice, “ promise me, declare to me, swear to me, it shall ever remain a secret in your own breast, and I will reveal to you, on whom she has placed her affections.”

This solemn preparation made lord Elmwood tremble; and he run over instantly in his mind all the persons he could recollect, in order to arrive at the knowledge by thought, quicker than by words.—It was in vain he tried, and he once more turned his enquiring eyes upon Miss Woodley.—He saw her silent and covered with confusion.—Again he searched his own thoughts, nor ineffectually as before.—At the first glance
the

the object was presented, and he beheld *himself*.

The rapid emotion of varying passions, which immediately darted over his features, informed Miss Woodley her secret was discovered—she hid her face, while the tears that fell down to her bosom, confirmed him in the truth of his suggestion beyond what oaths could have done.—A short interval of silence followed, during which she suffered tortures for the manner in which he would next speak to her—two seconds gave her this reply.

“For God’s sake take care what you are doing—you are destroying my prospects of futurity—you are making this world too dear to me.”

Her drooping head was then lifted up, and as she caught the eye of Dorisforth,

risforth, she saw it beam expectation, amaze, joy, ardour, love. — Nay, there was a fire, a vehemence in the quick fascinating rays it sent forth, she never before had seen — it filled her with alarm — she wished him to love Miss Milner, but to love her with moderation. — Miss Woodley was too little versed in the subject to know, that, had been, not to love at all; at least not to the extent of breaking through engagements, and all the various obstacles, that still militated against their union.

Lord Elmwood was sensible of the embarrassment his presence gave Miss Woodley, and understood the reproaches which she seemed to vent upon herself in silence. — To relieve her from both, he laid his hand with force upon his heart, and said, “Do you believe me?”

“I do,

"I do, my lord," she answered, trembling.

"I will make no unjust use of what I know." Returned he, with firmness.

"I believe you, my lord."

"But for what my passions now dictate," continued he, "I will not answer.—They are confused—they are triumphant at present.—I have never yet, however, been vanquished by them; and even upon this occasion, my reason shall combat to the last—that, shall fail me, before I do wrong."

He was going to leave the room—she followed him, and cried—"But my lord how shall I see again the unhappy object of my treachery?"

"See her," replied he, "as one to whom you meant no injury, and to whom you have done none."

"But

"But she would account it such, my lord."

"We are not judges of what belongs to ourselves;" — he replied, — "I am transported at the tidings you have revealed, and yet, perhaps, I had better never have heard them."

Miss Woodley was going to say something farther, but as if incapable of attending to her, he hasted out of the room.

CHAPTER VI.

Miss Woodley stood for some time to consider which way she was to go.—The first person she met would enquire, why she had been weeping to that excess her eyes were scarce discernible? and if Miss Milner was to ask the question, in what words could she tell, or in what manner deny the truth?—To avoid her, was her first caution, and she took the only method; she had a hackney-coach ordered, rode several miles out of town, and returned to dinner with so little remains of her swollen eyes, that complaining of the head-ach was a sufficient excuse for them.

Miss

Miss Milner was enough recovered to be present at dinner, though she scarce tasted a morsel. Lord Elmwood did not dine at home, at which Miss Woodley rejoiced, but at which Mr. Sandford appeared highly disappointed. — He asked the servants, several times, what his lordship said when he went out? they replied, “nothing more than that he should not be at home to dinner.” — “I can’t imagine where he dines?” said Sandford. — “Bless me, Mr. Sandford, can’t you guess?” (cried Mrs. Horton, who by this time was made acquainted with his intended marriage), “he dines with Miss Fenton to be sure.” — “No,” replied Sandford, “he is not there: I came from thence just now, and they had not seen him all day.” — Poor Miss Milner, on this, put

a mouthful into her mouth; for where we hope for nothing, we receive small indulgences with joy.

Notwithstanding the anxiety and trouble under which Miss Woodley had laboured all the morning, her heart for many weeks had not felt so light as it did this day at dinner.—The confidence she reposed in the promises of lord Elmwood—the firm reliance she had upon his delicacy and his justice—the unabated kindness with which her friend received her, while no one suspicious thought she knew, had taken harbour in her bosom—and the conscious integrity of her own intentions, however she might be misled by her judgment, all conspired to comfort her with the hope, she had done nothing she ought to wish recalled.—But although she felt

thus

thus tranquil, in respect to what she had divulged, yet she felt a great deal embarrassed with the dread of next seeing lord Elmwood.

Miss Milner, not having spirits to go abroad, passed the evening at home—she read part of a new opera, played upon her guitar, mused, sighed, occasionally talked with Miss Woodley, and so passed the tedious hours till near ten, when Mrs. Horton asked Mr. Sandford to play a game at piquet, and on his excusing himself, Miss Milner offered in his stead, and was gladly accepted.—They had just begun to play when lord Elmwood came into the room—Miss Milner's countenance immediately brightened, and although she was in a negligent morning dress, and looked paler than usual, she did not look less

100 A SIMPLE STORY.

beautiful—Miss Woodley was leaning on the back of her chair to observe the game, and Mr. Sandford sat reading one of the Greek Fathers at the other side of the fire place. Lord Elmwood as he advanced to the table bowed, not having seen the ladies since morning, or Miss Milner that day; they returned his salute, and he was going up to Miss Milner, (seemingly to enquire of her health,) when Mr. Sandford, laying down his book, said,

“My lord, where have you been all day?”

“I have been very busy.” Replied his lordship, and walking from the card-table went up to him.

Miss Milner began to make mistakes, and play one card for another.

“You have been at Mr. Fenton’s this evening, I suppose?” Said Sandford.

“No,

"No, not at all to-day." Replied his lordship.

"How came that about, my lord?" Cried Sandford.

Miss Milner played the ace of diamonds, instead of the king of hearts.

"I shall call to-morrow." Answered his lordship, and going with a very ceremonious air up to Miss Milner, said, "He hoped she was perfectly recovered."

Mrs. Horton begged her "To mind what she was about."

"She replied, "I am much better, Sir."

He then returned to Sandford again: but never, during all this time, did his eye once encounter Miss Woodley's, and she, with equal care, avoided his.

Some cold dishes were now brought up for supper—Miss Milner lost deal, and the game ended.

As they were arranging themselves at the supper-table, “Do, Miss Milner,” said Mrs. Horton, “have something warm for your supper? a chicken boiled? or something of that kind? you have eat nothing all day.”

With the feeling of humanity, and apparently no other sensation—but never did he feel philanthropy so forcibly—lord Elmwood said, “Let me beg of you, Miss Milner, to have something provided for you.”

The earnestness and emphasis with which these few words were pronounced, were more flattering than the finest turned compliment had been; her gratitude

gratitude was expressed by blushes, and by assuring his lordship she was now so well as to be able to sup on what was before her."—She spoke, however, and had not made the trial; for the moment she carried a piece to her lips, she laid it on her plate again, and turned paler, from the vain endeavour to force her appetite. Lord Elmwood had ever been attentive to her, but now he watched her as he would a child; and when he saw by her struggles she could not eat, he took her plate from her, gave her something else, and all with a care and watchfulness in his looks, as if he had been a tender-hearted boy, and she his darling bird, the loss of which, would embitter all the joy of his holidays.

He then said, "This

This attention had something about it so tender, so officious, and yet so sincere, that it brought the tears into Miss Woodley's eyes, attracted the notice of Mrs. Sandford, and the observation of Mrs. Horton, while the heart of Miss Milner overflowed with a gratitude that gave place to no sentiment, except her love.

To relieve that anxiety her guardian expressed, she endeavoured to appear cheerful, and that anxiety, at length, really made her so. — He now pressed her to take one glass of wine with such solicitude, he seemed to say a thousand things beside — Sandford still made his observations, and being unused to conceal his thoughts before the present company, he said, bluntly,

Miss

"Miss Fenton was indisposed the other night, my lord, and yet you did not seem half so anxious about her health."

Had Sandford laid all lord Elmwood's estate at Miss Milner's feet, or presented her with that eternal bloom which adorn the face of a goddess, he would have done less to endear himself to her, than by that single sentence—she looked at him with the most benign countenance, and felt affliction that she had ever offended him.

"Miss Fenton," (lord Elmwood replied) "has a brother with her, her health and happiness are in his care, Miss Milner's are in mine."

"Mr. Sandford," said Miss Milner, "I am afraid I behaved very uncivilly to you."

you last night; will you accept of an atonement?

"No, madam," returned he, "I accept no expiation without amendment."

"Well then," said she, smiling, "suppose I promise never to offend you again, what then?"

"Why then, you'll break your promise." Returned he, churlishly.

"Do not promise," said lord Elmwood, "for he means to provoke you to it."

In the like conversation the evening was passed, and Miss Milner retired to rest in far better spirits than the morning's prospect had given her to hope for. Miss Woodley too, had cause to be well pleased, but her pleasure was in a great measure eclipsed by the reflection, "there was such a person as Miss Fenton ;"

Fenton ;" she could not but fear, that in doing Miss Milner a right, she had, perhaps, done that lady a wrong—she wished she had been equally acquainted with her heart, as she was with Miss Milner's, and she would then have acted without injustice to either ; but Miss Fenton had of late shunned their society, and even in their company she was of a temper too reserved to discover her mind ; Miss Woodley was therefore obliged to act to the best of her judgment only, and leave all events to providence.

CHAPTER VII.

WITHIN a few days, in the house of lord Elmwood, every thing, and every person wore a new face.—His lordship was the profest lover of Miss Milner—the, the happiest of human beings.—Miss Woodley partaking in her joy—while Mr. Sandford was lamenting with the deepest concern, that Miss Fenton had been supplanted; and what added most poignantly to his sorrow was, that she had been supplanted by Miss Milner.—Though a church-man, he bore his disappointment with the impatience of one of the laity; he could hardly speak to lord Elmwood; he would not look at Miss Milner, and was displeased with every body.—It

was

was his intention when he first became acquainted with lord Elmwood's resolution, to quit his house; and as his lordship had, with the utmost degree of inflexibility, resisted all his good counsel and advice upon this subject, he resolved, in quitting him, never to be his adviser or counsellor again.—But, in preparing to leave his friend, his pupil, his patron, and yet him, who, upon most occasions, implicitly obeyed his will, the spiritual got the better of the temporal man, and he determined to stay, lest in totally abandoning him to the pursuit of his own passions, he might make his punishment even greater than his offence.—“My lord,” said he, “on the stormy sea, upon which you are embarked, though you will not then the rocks your faithful pilot would point out, he will, nevertheless, sail in
your

your company, and lament over your watery grave. The more you slight my advice, the more you want it, and till you command me to leave your house, (as I suppose you will soon do, to oblige your lady) I will continue along with you."

Lord Elmwood liked him sincerely, and was glad he took this resolution; yet as soon as his lordship's reason and affections had once told him, he ought to break with Miss Fenton, and marry his ward, he became so decidedly of that opinion, Sandford's never had the most trivial weight upon the subject, nor would he flatter the supposed authority he possessed over him, by urging him to remain in his house a single day, contrary to his inclinations. Sandford beheld, with grief, this firmness, but find-

ing

ing it vain to contend, submitted—not, however, with a good grace.

Amidst all the persons affected by this change in lord Elmwood's marriage designs, Miss Fenton was, perhaps, the least—she would have been content to have married, she was contented to live single—Mr. Sandford was the first who made overtures to her on the part of lord Elmwood, and the first sent to ask her to dispense with the obligation—She received both these proposals with the same insipid smile of approbation, and the same cold indifference at the heart.

It was a perfect knowledge of this disposition in his intended wife, which had given to lord Elmwood's thoughts, on matrimony, the prospect of dreary winter;

112 A SIMPLE STORY.

winter; but the sensibility of Miss Milner had now reversed that prospect to perpetual spring; or the dearer variety of spring, summer, and autumn.

It was a knowledge also of this corruption in Miss Fenton's nature, from which he formed the purpose of breaking with her; for lord Elmwood still retained enough of the priest's sanctity, to have yielded up his own happiness, and even that of his beloved ward, rather than have plunged one heart into affliction by his perfidy. This, before he offered his hand to Miss Milner, he was perfectly convinced would not be the case—even Miss Fenton, herself, assured him, her thoughts were more inclined towards the joys of Heaven than earth; and as this circumstance would, she believed, induce her to retire to a convent, she thought it a happy, rather than

than an unhappy event.—Her brother, on whom her fortune devolved if she took this resolution, was exactly of her opinion.

Lost in the maze of happiness which surrounded her, Miss Milner oftentimes asked her heart, and her heart whispered like a flatterer, “Yes.” Are not my charms even more invincible than I ever believed them to be? Dorrisforth, the grave, the sanctified, the anchorite Dorrisforth, by their force is animated to all the ardour of the most impassioned lover—while the proud priest, the austere guardian, is humbled, if I but frown, into the veriest slave of love.—She then asked, “Why did I not keep him longer in suspense? he could not have loved me more, I believe; but my power over him might have been greater

greater still.—I am the happiest of women in that affection he has proved to me, but I wonder whether it would exist under ill treatment? if it would not, he still does not love me as I wish to be loved—if it would, my triumph, my felicity, would be enhanced.”—These thoughts were mere phantoms of the brain, and never by system put into action; but repeatedly indulged, they were practised by casual occurrences; and the dear-bought experiment of being beloved in spite of her faults, (a glory proud women ever aspire to) was, at present, the ambition of Miss Milner.

Unthinking woman! she did not reflect, that to the searching eye of lord Elmwood she had faults, with her every care to conceal or overcome them, sufficient to try all his love, and
all

all his patience. But what female is not fond of experiments? to which, how few are there, that do not fall a sacrifice!

Perfectly secure of the affections of the man she loved, her declining health no longer threatened her; her declining spirits returned as before; and the suspicions of her guardian being now changed to the liberal confidence of a doating lover, she now again professed all her former follies, all her fashionable levities, and indulged them with less restraint than she had ever done.

For a while, blinded by his passion, lord Elmwood encouraged and admired every new proof of her restored happiness; nor till sufferance had tempted her to proceed beyond her usual bound,

did he remonstrate.—But she, who as his ward, had been ever gentle, and (when he strenuously opposed) always obedient; he now found as a mistress, sometimes haughty; and to opposition, always insolent.—He was surprised, but the novelty pleased him.—And Miss Milner, whom he tenderly loved, could put on no change, or appear in any new character that did not, for the time she adopted it, seem to become her.

Among the many causes of complaint she gave him, want of œconomy in the disposal of her income was one.—Bills and drafts came upon him without number, while the account, on her part, of money expended, amounted but to articles of dress she sometimes never wore; toys that were out of fashion before

before they were paid for; and charities directed by the force of whim.—Another complaint was, as usual, extreme late hours, and often-times company he did not approve.

She was charmed to see his love struggling with his censure—his politeness with his anxiety—and by the light, frivolous, or resentful manner, in which she treated his admonitions, she triumphed in shewing to Miss Woodley, and, more especially to Mr. Sandford, how much she dared upon the strength of his affections.

Every thing in preparation for their marriage, which was to take place at Elmwood-House during the summer months, she resolved for the short time she had to remain in London, to let no occasion

occasion pass of tasting all those pleasures which were not likely ever to return; but which, eager as she was in their pursuit, she still placed in no kind of competition with those she hoped would succeed; those more sedate, and far greater joys she had in domestic contemplation—and often, merely to hasten on the tedious hours that intervened, she varied and diverted them with the many recreations her intended husband could not approve.

It so happened, and it was unfortunate it did, that a law-suit and some other intricate affairs that came with his title and estate, frequently kept lord Elmwood from his house part of the day; sometimes the whole evening; and when at home, would often closter him for hours with his lawyers.—But while
he

he was thus off his guard, Sandford never was—and had Miss Milner been the dearest thing on earth to him, he could not have watched her more narrowly; or had she been the frailest thing on earth, he could not have been more hard upon her, in all the accounts of her conduct he gave to lord Elmwood.—His lordship knew Sandford's failing was to think ill of Miss Milner, he pitied him for it, and he pitied her for it—and all the aggravation his representations gave to her real follies, affection for them both, in the heart of Dorrisforth, stood between every other impression.

But facts are glaring; and he at length beheld those faults in their true colours, although previously pointed out by the prejudice of Mr. Sandford.

As soon as Sandford perceived his lordship's uneasiness, "There, my lord!" cried he, exultingly, "Did I not always say the marriage was an improper one?—but you would not be ruled—you would not see."

"Can you blame me for not seeing," replied his lordship, "when you yourself were blind?—Had you been dispassionate, had you seen Miss Milner's virtues as well as her faults, I should have believed, and been guided by you—but you saw her failings only, and therein have been equally deceived with me, who have only beheld her perfections."

"My observations, however, my lord, would have been of most use to you; for I have seen what to avoid."

"But mine have been the most charitable," replied his lordship, "for I have seen—what I must always love."

Sandford

Sandford sighed, and lifted up his hands.

"Mr. Sandford," resumed his lordship, with a voice and manner such as he puts on when not all the power of Sandford, or any other, can change his fixed determination, "Mr. Sandford," resumed he, "my eyes are now open to every failing, as well as to every accomplishment; to every vice, as well as to every virtue of Miss Milner's; nor will I suffer myself to be again prepossessed in her favour by your prejudice against her—for I believe it was compassion at your unkind treatment of her, that first gained her my heart."

"I, my lord?" cried Sandford, "Do not load me with the burthen—with the mighty burthen of your love for her."

"Do not interrupt me." Said his lordship; "Whatever your meaning has been,

been, the effect of your unkindness to her, is what I say.—Now, I will no longer,” continued he; “have an enemy such as you have been, to heighten her charms, which are too transcendent in their native state. I will hear no more complaints against her, but I will watch her closely myself—and if I find her mind and heart (such as my suspicions have of late whispered) too frivolous for that substantial happiness I look for with an object so beloved; depend upon my word—the marriage shall yet be broken off.”

“I depend upon your word; it *will* then.” Replied Sandford, eagerly.

“You are unjust, Sir, in saying so before the trial,” replied his lordship, “and your injustice shall make me more cautious, lest I follow your example.”

“But,

"But, my lord—" *Bella said, and*
 "My mind is made up, Mr. Sand-
 ford." Returned he, interrupting him,
 "I am no longer engaged to Miss
 Milner than she shall deserve I should—
 but in my observations I will take care
 not to wrong her as you have done."

"My lord, call my observations
 wrong, when you have reflected upon
 them as a man, and not as a lover—
 divest yourself of your passion, and meet
 me upon equal ground."

"I will meet no one—I will consult
 no one—my own judgment shall be the
 judge, and in a few months marry, or
 —banish me from her for ever."

There was something in these last
 words, in the tone and firmness with
 which they were delivered, that the
 heart of Sandford rested upon with con-

tent

tent—they bore the symptoms of a menace that would be executed; and he parted from his patron with congratulations upon his wisdom, and the warmest assurances of his firm reliance on his word.

Lord Elmwood having come to this resolution, was more composed than he had been for several days before; while the horror of domestic wrangles—a family without subordination—a house without economy—in a word, a wife without discretion, had been perpetually present to his mind.

Mr. Sandford, although he was a man of understanding, of learning, and a competent cabinet; yet, all the faults he himself committed, were entirely for want of knowing better.—He constantly
reproved

reproved faults in others, and he was most assuredly too good a man not to have corrected and amended his own, had they been known to him—but they were not.—He had been for so long time the superior of all with whom he lived, had been so busied with instructing others, he had not recollected he himself wanted instructions—and in such awe did his severity keep all about him, that notwithstanding he had many friends, not one told him of his failings—(except just now lord Elmwood, but who, in this instance, as a man in love, he would not credit).—Was there not then some reason for him to suppose he had no faults?—his enemies, indeed, hinted that he had, but enemies he never hearkened to; and thus, with all his good sense, wanted the sense to follow the rule, Be-

lieve

in his lately shall dwell the punishment
Believe what your enemies say of you, rather
than what is said by your friends; this
rule attended to, would make many a
one amiable that is now the reverse,
and had made him, a perfect upright
character.—For could an enemy, to
whom he would have listened, whisper-
ed to Sandford as he left lord Elm-
wood's study, "Cruel, barbarous man!
you go away with your heart satisfied,
nay, even elated in the prospect, that
Miss Milner's hopes, on which she alone
exists; those hopes which keep her from
the deepest affliction, and cherish her
with joy and gladness, will all be disap-
pointed—you flatter yourself it is for the
sake of your friend lord Elmwood you
rejoice; because he has escaped a dan-
ger—you wish him well, but there is
another cause for your exultation which
you will not seek to know—it is, that
in

in his safety shall dwell the punishment of his ward.—For shame! for shame! forgive her faults, as this of your's needs forgiveness."

Had any one said this, to Sandford, whom he would have credited; or had his own heart suggested it, he was a man of that rectitude and conscientiousness, he would have returned immediately to lord Elmwood, and have endeavoured to strengthen all his favourable opinions of his intended wife—but having no such monitor as this, he walked on, highly contented, and meeting Miss Woodley, said, with an air of triumph, "Where's your young lady?—where's lady Elmwood?"

Miss Woodley smiled, and answered—
"She was gone with such and such ladies

to
you will not seek to know—it is that
in

to an auction. — "But why give her that title already, Mr. Sandford?"

"Because," answered he, "I think she will never have it."

"Bless me, Mr. Sandford!" said Miss Woodley, "you shock me!"

"I thought I should," replied he, "and that is why I tell it you."

"For Heaven's sake, what has happened?" cried she.

"Nothing new — her indiscretions only."

"I know she is imprudent," said Miss Woodley; "I can see she is often to blame — but then my lord surely loves her, and love will overlook a great deal."

"He does love her — but he has understanding and resolution. — He loved his sister too, tenderly loved her, and yet when he had taken the resolution; passed

passed his word he would never see her again; even upon her death-bed he would not retract it—no entreaties could prevail upon him.—And now, though he maintains, and I dare say loves her child, yet you remember when you brought him home he would not bear him in his sight.”

“Poor Miss Milner!”—Said Miss Woodley in the most pitying accents.

“Nay,” said Sandford, “lord Elmwood has not yet passed his word, that he will never see her more—he has only threatened to say so—but I know enough of him to know, his threats are generally the same as the actions done.”

“You are very good,” said Miss Woodley, “to acquaint me of this in time: I may now warn Miss Milner of it, and she may behave with more circumspection.”

"By no means,"—cried Sandford, hastily, "What would you warn her for?—it will do her no good—besides," added he, "I don't know whether his lordship does not expect secrecy from me on this subject, and if he does——"

"But, with all deference to your opinion," said Miss Woodley, (and with all deference did she speak) "don't you think, Mr. Sandford, that secrecy upon this occasion would be wicked? for consider the anguish it may cause my friend, and if by advising her we can save her from——" She was going on.

"You may call wicked, madam, not to inform her of it," cried he, "but I call a breach of promise (if I did give my promise, which I don't say I did) much more sinful."

"I sup-

"I suppose you are right; Sir," said Miss Woodley, with humility; "but if you have given your promise, I have not given mine, and therefore may divulge——"

"There now!" cried Sandford, "there is how you judge of this matter.—You judge of things as they are in reality, not what they are by construction; the only way to judge of any thing.—If I did make a promise to lord Elmwood—(which, I again say, I don't know that I did)—the promise was, that I would not communicate the secret; meaning, not tell it to Miss Milner herself.—I have not; and therefore have kept my word—and in revealing it to you, I did it with a full persuasion you would conceal it; which confidence, on my part, binds you as much

as the most solemn promise you could have given."

"The fault will be mine, then, not yours, if it comes to the knowledge of Miss Milner?"

"Certainly."

"Then, as it will be my fault, do not you, Sir, be uneasy about it."—

He was going to explain again, but Miss Milner entered, and put an end to the discourse.—She had been passing the whole morning at an auction, and had laid out near two hundred pounds in different things she had no one use for, but bought them because they were said to be cheap.—Among the rest was a lot of books on chemistry, and some Latin authors.

"Why, madam," cried Sandford, looking over the catalogue, where her purchases were marked by a pencil,

"do

"do you know what you have done? you can't read a word of these books."

"Can't I, Mr. Sandford? but I assure you, you will be vastly pleased with them when you see how elegantly they are bound."

"My dear," said Mrs. Horton, "why have you bought china? you and Lord Elmwood have more now, than you have places to put them in."

"Very true, Mrs. Horton—I forgot that—but then you know I can give these away."

Lord Elmwood was in the room at the conclusion of this conversation—he shook his head and sighed.

"My lord," said she, "I have had a very pleasant morning, but I wished for you—if you had been with me I should have bought a great many other things; but

but I did not like to appear unreasonable in your absence."

"Sandford fixed his inquisitive eyes upon lord Elmwood, to observe his countenance—his lordship smiled, but appeared thoughtful.

"And, oh! my lord, I have bought you a present." Said she.

"I do not wish for a present, Miss Milner."

"What, not from me?—very well."

"If you present me with yourself, madam, it is all I ask."

Sandford moved upon his chair as if he sat uneasy.

"Why then, Miss Woodley," said Miss Milner, "you shall have the present.—But then it won't suit you—it is for a gentleman.—I'll keep it and give it to my lord Frederick the first time I meet with him.—I saw him this morning,

ing, and he looked divinely; I longed to speak to him."

Miss Woodley cast, by stealth, an eye of apprehension upon lord Elmwood's face, and trembled to behold it red as scarlet.

Sandford stared with both his eyes full upon him; then drew himself upright on his chair, and took a pinch of snuff upon the strength of his uneasiness.

A silence ensued.

After a short time—"You all appear very melancholy," said Miss Milner; "I wish I had not come home yet."

Miss Woodley was in agony—she saw lord Elmwood's extreme displeasure, and dreaded lest he should express it by some words he could not recall, or she could not forgive—therefore, whispering to her she had something particular to say to her, she took her out of the room.

The moment she was gone, Mr. Sandford rose nimbly from his seat, rubbed his hands, walked briskly across the room, then asked his lordship, in a cheerful tone, "Whether he dined at home to-day?"

That which had given Sandford spirits to speak with cheerfulness, had depressed lord Elmwood's so much, that he sat silent and dejected.—At length he answered, in a faint voice, "No, I believe I shall *not* dine at home."

"Where is your lordship going to dine?" asked Mrs. Horton; "I thought we should have had your company to-day; Miss Milner dines at home, I believe."

"I have not yet determined where I shall dine." Replied he, taking no notice of the conclusion of her speech.

"My

"My lord, if you mean to go to the hotel, I'll go with you, if you please," cried Sandford, officiously.

"With all my heart, Sandford." Replied his lordship; and they both went out together before Miss Milner returned to the apartment.

"Where is your lordship going to dine?" asked Miss Milner. "I thought we should have had your company to-day," Miss Milner dined at home, I believe," "I have not yet determined where I shall dine," Replied he, taking no notice of the conclusion of her speech.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISS Woodley, for the first time, disobeyed the will of Mr. Sandford; and as soon as Miss Milner and she were alone, informed her of all he had revealed to her; accompanying the recital with every testimony of sympathy and affection.—But had the genius of Sandford presided over this discovery, it could not have influenced the mind of Miss Milner to receive the intelligence, more exactly opposite to the intention of the informer. Instead of shuddering with fear at the menace Lord Elmwood had uttered, she boldly said, she “Dared him to perform it.” “He durst not.” Repeated she.

“Then”

“Why”

"Why durst not?" Said Miss Woodley.

"Because he loves me too well—because his own happiness is too dear to him."

"I believe he loves you," replied Miss Woodley, "and yet there is a doubt if—"

"There shall be no longer a doubt," cried Miss Milner, "I'll put him to the proof."

"For shame, my dear! you talk inconsiderately—what do you mean by proof?"

"I mean, I will do something that any prudent man ought not to forgive, and yet, with that vast share of prudence he possesses, I will force him still to yield to his love."

"But suppose you should be disappointed, and he should not yield?" Said Miss Woodley.

"Then, I have only lost a man who had no regard for me."

"He may have a great regard for you, notwithstanding."

"But for the love I have, and do still bear my lord Elmwood, I will have something more than a great regard in return."

"You have his love, I am sure."

"But is it such as mine?—I could love him if he had a thousand faults."

And yet," said she, recollecting herself, "and yet, I believe, his being faultless, was the first cause of my passion."

Thus she talked on—sometimes in anger, sometimes apparently jesting—till her servant came to tell her dinner was served.—Upon entering the dining-room, and seeing his lordship's place at table vacant, she started back. She was disappointed

disappointed of the pleasure she expected in dining with him; and his sudden absence so immediately after the intelligence she had received from Miss Woodley, encreased her uneasiness.—She drew her chair, and sat down with an indifference, that said she should not eat; and as soon as she was seated, she put her fingers sullenly to her lips, nor touched her knife and fork, or spoke a word in reply to any thing that was said to her during the whole dinner.—Miss Woodley and Mrs. Horton were both too well acquainted with the good disposition of her heart, to take offence, or any notice of this behaviour.—They dined, and wisely said nothing either to provoke or soothe her.—Just as the dinner was going to be removed, a loud rap came at the door.—“Who is that?” Said Mrs. Horton.—One of the

the servants went to the window, and answered, "My lord and Mr. Sandford, madam."—"Come back to dinner, as I live." Cried Mrs. Horton.

Miss Milner still continued her position and said nothing—but at the corners of her mouth, which her fingers did not entirely cover, there were discoverable a thousand dimpled graces like small convulsive fibres, which a restrained smile on lord Elmwood's return, had sent there.

His lordship and Sandford entered. "I am glad you are returned, my lord," said Mrs. Horton, "for Miss Milner would not eat a morsel."

"It was because I had no appetite," returned she, blushing like crimson. "We

"We should not have come back," said Sanford, "but at the place where we went to dine, all the rooms were filled with smoke."

"It has been a very windy day indeed," said Mrs. Horton, "and one part of this house, is now in a smother."

Lord Elmwood put the wing of a fowl on Miss Milner's plate, but without previously asking if she chose any; yet she condescended to eat—they spoke to each other too in the course of conversation, yet it was with a reserve that appeared as if they had been quarrelling, and so felt to themselves, though no such circumstance had happened.

About two weeks passed away in this kind of distant behaviour on both sides; without either venturing a direct quarrel,

quarrel, and without either expressing (except inadvertently) their strong affection for each other.

During this time they were once, however, nearly becoming the dearest friends in expressions, as well as in sentiments.—This arose from a favour he granted in compliance to what he knew was her earnest desire; and, as a favour which he had refused to the repeated requests of many friends, she could not but esteem the high value of the obligation.

She and Miss Woodley had taken an airing to see the poor child, young Rushbrook; and on their return, his lordship inquiring of the ladies how they had passed their morning, Miss Milner frankly told him; and added,
 “What

What pain it gave her to leave the child behind, as he still cried to come away with her."

"Go for him then to-morrow," said his lordship, and bring him home."

"Home!" She repeated, with surprise.

"Yes," replied he, "if you desire it, this shall be his home—you shall be a mother, and I will, henceforward, be a father to him."

Sandford, who was present, looked unusually sour at this high token of his lordship's regard to Miss Milner; yet, with resentment on his face, he wiped a tear of joy from his eye, for the boy's sake—his frown was the force of prejudice, his tear the force of nature.

Rushbrook was brought home; and whenever lord Elmwood wished to show

a kindness to Miss Milner, without directing it immediately to her, he took his nephew upon his knee, talked to him, and told him, he "Was glad they had become acquainted,"

In the various, though delicate, struggles for power between Miss Milner and her guardian, there was not one person witness to these incidents, who did not suppose, all would at last end in wedlock—for the most common observer perceived, ardent love was the foundation of every discontent, as well, as of every joy they experienced.—One great incident, however, totally reversed the prospect of all future accommodation.

The fashionable Mrs. G—— gave a masked ball, tickets were presented to persons of the first quality, and among

among the rest, three were sent to Miss Milner.—She had never been at a masquerade, and received them with ecstasy—more especially as the masque being at the house of a woman of fashion, she did not conceive there could be any objection to her going.—She was mistaken—the moment she mentioned it to lord Elmwood, he desired her, somewhat sternly, “Not to think of being there.”—She was vexed at the prohibition, but more at the manner in which it was delivered, and flatly said, “She should certainly go.”

She expected a severe rebuke for this, but what alarmed her much more, he never replied a word; but looked with a resignation which foreboded her more sorrow, than the severest reproaches would have done.—She sat for a minute reflecting how to rouse him from

stagnation

L 2

this

this composure—the first thought of attacking him with upbraidings; then the thought of soothing him; and at last of laughing at him.—This was the least supportable of all, and yet this she ventured upon.

“I am sure your lordship,” said she, “with all your saintliness, can have no objection to my being present at the masquerade, provided I go as a Nun.”

He made no reply.

“That is a habit,” continued she, “which covers a multitude of faults—and, for that evening, I may have the chance of making a conquest even of you, my lord—nay, I question not, if under that inviting attire, even the pious Mr. Sandford would not ogle me.”

“Hush,”—Said Miss Woodley.

“Why hush?” cried Miss Milner, aloud, though Miss Woodley had

had spoken in a whisper, "I am sure," continued she, "I am only repeating what I have read in books about nuns, and their confessors." "Your conduct, Miss Milner," replied lord Elmwood, "gives evident proofs what authors you have read; you may spare yourself the trouble of quoting them."

Her pride was hurt at this, beyond bearing; and as she could not, like him, govern her anger, it flushed in her face, and almost forced the tears.

"My lord," said Miss Woodley, (in a voice so soft and peaceful, it ought to have calmed the resentment of both,) "my lord, suppose you were to accompany Miss Milner? there are tickets for three, and you can then have no objection."

Miss Milner's brow was immediately smoothed; her eye beamed hope; and she fetched a sigh in anxious expectation he would consent.

"I go, Miss Woodley?" he replied, with astonishment; "Do you imagine I would play the buffoon at a masque-rade?"

Miss Milner's face changed to its former state.

"I have seen many grave characters there, my lord." Said Miss Woodley.

"Dear Miss Woodley," cried Miss Milner, "why persuade lord Elmwood to put on a mask, just at the time he has laid it aside?"

His patience seemed now to be tempted to its height, and he answered,

"If you suspect it, madam, you shall find me changed."

Pleased,

Pleased, she had been able at last to irritate him, she smiled with a degree of triumph, and in that humour was going to reply; but before she could speak four words, and before she thought of it, he abruptly left the room.

She was highly offended at this insult, and declared, "From that moment she banished him her heart for ever." And to prove she set both his love and anger at defiance, she immediately ordered her chariot, and said, she "was going to some of her acquaintance, whom she knew had tickets, and with whom she would fix upon the dress she meant to appear in at the masquerade; for nothing, unless she was locked up, should alter the resolution she had taken, of being there." To re-

152 A SIMPLE STORY.

monstrate at that moment, Miss Woodley knew would be in vain; the chariot came to the door, and she drove away.

She did not return to dinner, nor till late in the evening; lord Elmwood was at home, but never once mentioned her name.

She came home, after he had retired to bed, and in great spirits; the first time she ever appeared careless what he might think of her behaviour:—but her whole thoughts were occupied upon the business she had been about, and her dress engrossed all her conversation as soon as Miss Woodley and she were alone.—She told Miss Woodley, she had been shewn the greatest variety of beautiful and becoming dresses she had ever beheld, and yet, said she, “I have fixed upon

upon a very plain one; but one I look so well in, you will hardly know me when I have it on."

"You are seriously then resolved to go," said Miss Woodley, "provided you hear no more on the subject from your guardian?"

"Whether I do or not, Miss Woodley, I am equally resolved to go."

"But you know, my dear, he has desired you not — and you used always to obey his commands."

"As my guardian, I certainly did obey him; and I could obey him as a husband; but as a lover, I will not."

"Yet that is the means, never to have him for a husband."

"As he pleases—for if he will not submit to be my lover, I will not submit to be his wife — nor has he the affection I require in a husband."

Thus,

Thus, the old sentiments were repeated as heretofore, and prevented a separation till towards morning.

Miss Milner, for that night, dreamt less of her guardian than of the masquerade. On the evening of the next day it was to be; she was up early, breakfasted in her dressing-room, and remained there most of the day, busied in all the thousand preparations for the night; one of which, was to take every particle of powder out of her hair, and have it curled all over in falling ringlets.—Her next care was, that her dress should exactly fit, and display her fine person to the best advantage—it did so.—Miss Woodley entered as it was trying on, and was struck with astonishment at the elegance of the habit, and the

the beautiful effect it had upon her graceful person; but most of all, she was astonished at her venturing on such a character—for although it was there presentative of the goddess of Chastity, yet from the buskins, and the petticoat made to feltoon far above the ankle, it had, on the first glance, the appearance of a female much less virtuous. — Miss Woodley admired the dress, yet objected to it; but as she admired first, her objections after had no weight.

“Where is lord Elinwood?” said Miss Milner, “he must not see me.”

“No, for heaven’s sake,” cried Miss Woodley, “I would not have him see you for the universe.”

“And yet,” returned the other, with a sigh, “Why am I then thus pleased with this dress? for I had rather he should
admire

admire me than all the world beside, and yet he is not to see me in it."

"But he would not admire you thus." Said Miss Woodley.

"How shall I contrive to avoid him," said Miss Milner, "if he should offer to hand me into my carriage? — but I believe he will not be in good humour enough for that."

"You had better dress at the ladies' house with whom you go." Said Miss Woodley; and this was agreed upon.

At dinner they learnt, his lordship was to go that evening to Windsor, in order to be in readiness for the king's hunt, early in the morning; and this intelligence having dispersed Miss Milner's fears, she concluded to dress at home."

Lord

Lord Elmwood appeared at dinner in an even, but not in a good-temper; — the subject of the masquerade was never brought up, or indeed was once in his thoughts; for though he was offended at his ward's behaviour on the occasion, and thought she committed a fault in telling him, "She would go," yet he never suspected she meant to do so, not even at the time she said it, much less that she would persist, coolly and deliberately in so direct a contradiction to his will.—She, for her part, flattered herself his going to Windsor, was intended in order to give her an opportunity of passing the evening as she pleased, without his being obliged to know of it, and consequently to complain.—Miss Woodley,

who

who was willing to hope as she wished, began to be of the same opinion; and, without reluctance, dressed herself as a wood-nymph, to accompany her friend.

A short time after, another wood-nymph came to call upon the first, and she found her friend waiting for her. They went to a wood, and there they found a group of wood-nymphs, and some of them were to accompany them, and make up the number of ten.

They had not been in the house two minutes, when a knocking was heard at the door—it was Mr. Wood in a post-chaise. — I have some occasion the next day's hunt was put off: he had been made acquainted with it, and came from Woodstock at that late hour. — After his lordship had told Mrs. Hor- ton and Mr. Sedley, who were sitting together,

CHAPTER IX.

AT half after eleven, Miss Milner's chair, and another with Miss Woodley, took them from lord Elmwood's house to call upon the party (a group of wood-nymphs and huntresses) which were to accompany them, and make up the suit of Diana.

They had not left the house two minutes, when a thundering rap came at the door—it was lord Elmwood in a post chaise. — Upon some occasion the next day's hunt was put off: he had been made acquainted with it, and came from Windsor at that late hour. — After his lordship had told Mrs. Horton and Mr. Sandford, who were sitting together,

together, the cause of his sudden return, and some supper was ordered for him, he inquired, "What company had just left the house?"

"We have been alone the whole evening, my lord." Replied Mrs. Horton.

"Nay," returned he, "I saw two chairs, with several servants, come out of the door as I drove up; but what livery I could not discern."

"We have had no creature here." Repeated Mrs. Horton.

"Nor has Miss Milner?" Asked he.

This brought Mrs. Horton to her recollection, and she cried; "Oh! now I know."—And then checked herself, as if she knew too much.

"What do you know, madam?"

Said his lordship, sharply.

"No-

"Nothing"—said Mrs. Horton; "I know nothing." And she lifted up her hands and shook her head.

"So all people say, who know a great deal," cried Sandford, "and I suspect, that is at present your case."

"Then I know more than I wish to know, I am sure, Mr. Sandford." Returned she, shrugging up her shoulders.

Lord Elmwood was all impatience. "Explain, madam, explain." Cried he.

"Dear my lord," said she, "if your lordship will recollect, you may just have the same knowledge that I have."

"Recollect what?" Said he, sternly.

"The quarrel you and your ward had about the masquerade."

"What of that? she is not gone there?" He cried.

"I am not sure she is," returned Mrs. Horton, "but if your lordship

saw two sedan chairs going out of this house, I cannot but suspect it must be Miss Milner, and my niece going to the masquerade."

His lordship made no answer, but rung the bell violently.—A servant entered.—"Send Miss Milner's woman hither," said he, "immediately."—The man withdrew.

"Nay, my lord," cried Mrs. Horton, "any of the other servants could tell you just as well, whether Miss Milner is at home, or gone out."

"Perhaps not." Replied he.

The maid entered.

"Where is your lady?" Said he.

The woman had received no orders to conceal where her lady was gone, and yet some secret influence which governs the thoughts of all waiting women

men and chamber maids, whispered to her, she ought not to tell the truth.

"Where is your lady?" Repeated lord Elmwood, in a louder voice than before.

"Gone out, my lord." She replied.

"Where?"

"My lady did not tell me."

"And don't you know?"

"No, my lord." She answered, and without blushing.

"Is this the night of the masquerade?" Said he.

"I don't know, my lord, upon my word; but, I believe, my lord, it is not."

Sandford, as soon as lord Elmwood had asked the last question, run hastily to the table, at the other side of the room, snatched something from it, and returned to his place again—and as

soon as the maid said, "It was not the night of the masquerade," he exclaimed, "But it is, my lord, it is—yes, it is." And showing a news-paper he held in his hand, pointed to the paragraph which contained the information.

"Leave the room," said lord Elmwood to the woman, "I have done with you."—She withdrew.

"Yes, yes, here it is." Repeated Sandford, with the paper in his hand.—He then read the paragraph: "*The masquerade at the honourable Mrs. G——'s this evening—*" "This evening, my lord, you find:" "*it is expected will be the most brilliant, of any thing of the kind, for these many years past.*"

"They should not put such things in the papers," said Mrs. Horton, "to tempt young women to their ruin."

The word ruin, seemed to grate upon his lordship's ear, and he said to the servant who came to wait on him, while he supped, "Take the supper away."—He had not attempted to eat, or even to sit down; and he now walked backwards and forwards in the room, lost in thought and care.

A little time after, one of Miss Milner's footmen came in upon some occasion, and Mr. Sandford said to him, "Pray did you attend your lady to the masquerade?"

"Yes, Sir." Replied the man.

Lord Elmwood stopt himself short in his walk, and said to the servant, "You did?"

"Yes, my lord." Replied he.

His lordship walked again.

"I should like to know what she was drest in." Said Mrs. Horton; and turning to the servant, "Do you know what your lady had on?"

"Yes, madam," replied the man, "she was in mens cloaths."

"How?" cried lord Elmwood.

"You tell a story to be sure." Said Mrs. Horton to the servant,

"No," cried Sandford, "I am sure he does not; for he is an honest good young man, and would not tell a lie upon any account,—would you?"

Lord Elmwood ordered Miss Milner's woman to be again sent up.—She came.

"In what dress did your lady go to the masquerade?" Asked his lordship, and with a look so extremely morose, it seemed to command her to answer in a word, and to answer truly.

A mind

A mind, with a spark of sensibility more than she possessed, could not have equivocated with such an interrogator, but her reply was, "She went in her own dress, my lord."

"Was it a man's, or a woman's dress?" Asked his lordship with the same commanding look.

"Ha, ha, my lord," (half laughing and half crying,) "a woman's dress to be sure, my lord."

On which Sandford cried,

"Call the footman up, and let him confront her."

He was called; but lord Elmwood, now disgusted with the scene, sat down at the farther end of the room, and left Sandford to question them.

M 4 With

With all the authority and consequence of a country magistrate, Sandford, with his back to the fire and the witnesses before him, began with the footman.

"In what dress do you say, you saw your lady, when you attended, and went along with her, to the masquerade?"

"In mens cloaths." Replied the man, boldly and firmly as before.

"Bless my soul, George, how can you say such a thing?" Cried the woman.

"In what dress, do you say she went in?" Cried Sandford to her.

"In women's cloaths, indeed, Sir."

"This is very odd!" said Mrs. Horton.

"Had

"Had she on, or had she not on, a Coat?" Asked Sandford.

"Yes, Sir, a petticoat," Replied the woman,

"Do you say she had on a petticoat?" Said Sandford to the man,

"I can't answer exactly for that," replied he, "but I know she had boots on."

"They were not boots," replied the maid, with vehemence, "indeed, Sir, (turning to Sandford) they were only half boots."

"My girl," said Sandford, kindly to her, "your own evidence convicts her. —What has a woman to do with *any* boots?"

Impatient at this mummerly, lord Elmwood rose from his seat, and ordered the servants out of the room; and then

then looking at his watch, found it was near one. "At what time am I to expect her at home?" said he.

"Perhaps not till three in the morning," answered Mrs. Horton.

"Three! six, more likely," cried Sandford.

"I can't wait with patience till that time," answered his lordship with a most anxious sigh.

"You had better go to bed, my lord," said Mrs. Horton, "and by sleeping, the time will pass away unperceived."

"If I *could* sleep, madam," returned he.

"Will you play a game of cards, my lord?" said Sandford, "for I will not leave you till she comes home, and though I am not used to sit up all night——"

"All

"All night," repeated his lordship, "she durst not stay all night."

"And yet, after going," said Sandford, "in defiance to your commands, I should suppose she dares?"

"She is in good company, at least, my lord." Said Mrs. Horton.

"She does not know herself, what company she is in," Replied his lordship.

"How should she?" cried Sandford, "where every one hides his face."

Till five o'clock in the morning, in such conversation as this, the hours passed away. — Mrs. Horton, indeed, retired to her chamber at two, and left the gentlemen to a graver discourse, but a discourse still less advantageous to poor Miss Milner.

She

She, during this time, was at the scene of pleasure she had pictured to herself, and all the pleasure it gave her was, that she was sure she should never desire to go to a masquerade again. — The crowd and bustle fatigued her—the freedom offended her delicacy—and though she perceived she was the first object of admiration in the place, yet there was one person still wanting to admire; and the remorse at having transgressed his injunctions for so trivial an entertainment, weighed upon her spirits, and added to its weariness.—She would have come away sooner than she did, but she could not, with any degree of good manners, leave the company with whom she went, and not till half after four were they prevailed on to return.

Day-light just peeped through the shutters of the room where his lordship

ship

ship and Sandford were sitting, when the sound of her carriage, and its sudden stop at the door, caused lord Elmwood as suddenly to start from his seat. — He trembled extremely, and looked pale. — Sandford was ashamed to seem to notice it, yet he could not help asking him, “To take a glass of wine.” — He took it — and for once evinced he was reduced so low, as to be glad of such a resource.

What passion thus agitated lord Elmwood at this crisis, it is hard to define. — Perhaps it was indignation at Miss Milner’s imprudence, and the satisfaction he felt at being on the point of revenge — perhaps his emotion arose from joy, to find she was safe — perhaps it was perturbation at the regret he felt that he must upbraid her — perhaps it was
 shutters of the room where the lord-
 ship

was one alone of these sensations, but most probably, it was them all combined.

She, wearied out with the tedious night's dissipation, and less joyous than melancholy, had fallen asleep as she rode home, and when the carriage stopt, came half asleep out of it. —

“Light me to my bed-chamber instantly.” Said she to her woman, who waited in the hall to receive her. — But one of lord Elmwood’s valets went up to her, and answered, “Madam, my lord desires to see you before you go to bed.”

“Your lord, man?” cried she, “Is he not out of town?”

“No, madam, my lord has been at home ever since you went out, and has been

been sitting up with Mr. Sandford, waiting for your return."

She was wide awake instantly. — The heaviness was removed from her eyes, but fear, grief, and shame, seized upon her heart. — She leaned against her woman, as if unable to support herself under those feelings, and said to Miss Woodley,

"Make my excuse—I can't see him to night—I am unfit—indeed I cannot."

Miss Woodley was alarmed at the thought of going to him by herself, and thus perhaps aggravating him still more; she therefore said, "He has sent for you; for heaven's sake, do not disobey him a second time."

"No, dear madam," cried her woman, "for he is like a lion—he has been scolding me."

"Good

was one alone of these sensations, but most probably, it was them all combined.

She, wearied out with the tedious night's dissipation, and less joyous than melancholy, had fallen asleep as she rode home, and when the carriage stopt, came half asleep out of it. —

“Light me to my bed-chamber instantly.” Said she to her woman, who waited in the hall to receive her. — But one of lord Elmiwood’s valets went up to her, and answered, “Madam, my lord desires to see you before you go to bed.”

“Your lord, man?” cried she, “Is he not out of town?”

“No, madam, my lord has been at home ever since you went out, and has been

been sitting up with Mr. Sandford, waiting for your return."

She was wide awake instantly. — The heaviness was removed from her eyes, but fear, grief, and shame, seized upon her heart. — She leaned against her woman, as if unable to support herself under those feelings, and said to Miss Woodley,

"Make my excuse—I can't see him to night—I am unfit—indeed I cannot."

Miss Woodley was alarmed at the thought of going to him by herself, and thus perhaps aggravating him still more; she therefore said, "He has sent for you; for heaven's sake, do not disobey him a second time."

"No, dear madam," cried her woman, "for he is like a lion—he has been scolding me."

"Good

"Good God!" exclaimed Miss Milner, (and in a tone that seemed prophetic) "Then he is not to be my husband, after all."

"Yes," cried Miss Woodley, "if you will only be humble, and appear sorry.—You know your power over him, and all may yet be well."

She turned her speaking eyes upon her friend, the tears starting from them, her lips trembling; "Do I not appear sorry?" She cried.

The bell at that moment rung furiously, and they mended their pace to the door of the apartment where his lordship was.

"No, this is only fright,"—replied Miss Woodley, "Say to him you are sorry, and beg his pardon."

"I cannot," said she, "if Mr. Sandford is with him."

The

The servant opened the door, and she and Miss Woodley went in.—Lord Elmwood by this time was composed, and received her with a slight inclination of his head; she bowed to him in return, and said, with some marks of humility,

“I suppose, my lord, I have done wrong.”

“You have indeed,” Miss Milner answered he, “but do not suppose, I mean to upbraid you; I am, more over, going to release you from any such apprehension *for the future.*”

Those last three words he spoke with a countenance so serious and so determined, with an accent so firm and so decided, they pierced through her heart.

—She did not however weep, or even sigh; but her friend, Miss Woodley,

VOL. II.

N

knowing

knowing what she felt, exclaimed, "Oh!" as if for her.

She herself strove with her anguish, and replied, (but with a faltering voice) "I expected as much, my lord."

"Then, madam, you may perhaps expect all that I intend?"

"In regard to myself," she replied, "I suppose I do."

"Then," said he, "you may expect in a few days we shall part."

"I am prepared for it, my lord." She answered, and while she said so, sunk upon a chair.

"My lord, what you have to say farther," said Miss Woodley, in tears, "defer till the morning; Miss Milner, you see, is not able to bear it now."

"I have nothing to say farther," replied he, coolly, "I have now only to act."

"Lord

"Lord Elmwood," cried Miss Milner, divided between grief and anger, "you think to frighten me by your menaces, but I can part with you; heaven knows I can—your late behaviour has reconciled me to a separation."

On this he was going out of the room—but Miss Woodley, catching hold of him, cried, "Oh! my lord, do not leave her in this sorrow—pity her weakness, and forgive it."—She was proceeding, and he seemed inclined to listen to her, when Sandford called out in so sharp a tone,

"Miss Woodley, what do you mean?" she gave a start, and desisted.

His lordship turned to Sandford and said, "Nay, Mr. Sandford, you need entertain no doubts of me; I have judged, and have deter—"

He was going to say determined; but Miss Milner, who dreaded to hear the word, interrupted the period, and exclaimed, "Oh! could my poor father know the grief, the days of sorrow, I have experienced since his death, how would he repent his fatal choice in a protector!"

This sentence, wherein his friend's memory was recalled, with the additional allusion to her long, and secret affection for himself, affected lord Elmwood much—he was moved, but ashamed of being so, and as soon as possible, conquered the propensity.—Yet, for a short interval, he did not know whether to go out of the room, or to remain in it; whether to speak, or to be silent.—At length he turned towards her and said,

"Appeal

"Appeal to your father in some other form, in that (pointing to her dress) he will not know you.—Reflect upon him too in your moments of dissipation, and let his idea controul your indiscretions—not merely in an hour of contradiction call peevishly upon his name, only to wound the dearest friend you have."

There was a degree of truth, and a degree of feeling, in the conclusion of this speech, that alarmed Sandford, and he caught up one of the candles, and laying hold of his lordship's elbow, drew him out of the room, crying, "Come, my lord, come to your bed-chamber, it is very late—it is morning—it is time to rise." And by a continual repetition of these words, in a very loud voice, drowned whatever his

lordship, or any other person, might have wished to have spoken, or heard.

—In this manner, lord Elmwood was taken out of the apartment, and the evening's entertainment concluded.

CHAPTER X.

TWO whole days passed in the bitterest suspense on the part of Miss Milner, while neither one word or look from lord Elmwood, denoted the most trivial change of those sentiments he had declared on the night of the masquerade.

—Still those sentiments, or intentions, were not explicitly delivered; they were more like intimations, than solemn declarations — for though he had said, “He would never reproach her *for the future*,” and that “she might expect they should part,” he had not positively said they should; and upon this doubtful meaning of his words, she hung with the strongest agitation of hope, and of fear.

Miss Woodley seeing the distress of her mind, (much as she endeavoured to conceal it) entreated, nay implored, of her, to permit her to be a mediator; to suffer her to ask for a private interview with lord Elmwood, and provided she found him inflexible, behave with a proper degree of spirit in return; but if he appeared not absolutely averse to a reconciliation, to offer it to him in so cautious a manner, it might take place without farther uneasiness on either side. But Miss Milner peremptorily forbad this, and acknowledging to her friend every weakness she felt on the occasion, yet concluded with solemnly declaring, "That after what had passed between her and lord Elmwood, *he must be the first to make* a con-

a concession, before she herself would condescend to be reconciled."

"I believe, I know lord Elmwood's temper," replied Miss Woodley, "and I do not think he will be easily induced to beg pardon for a fault, which he thinks you have committed."

"Then he does not love me."

"Pshaw! Miss Milner, this is the old argument.—He may love you too well to spoil you—consider, he is your guardian as well as your lover, he means also to become your husband; and he is a man of such nice honour, he will not give you a specimen of that power before marriage, which he does not intend to submit to hereafter."

"But tenderness, affection, the politeness due from a lover to his mistress, demands this submission; and as I now despair of enticing, I will oblige him

to

to it—at least I'll make the trial, and know my fate at once."

"What do you mean to do?"

"Invite my lord Frederick to the house, and ask my guardian's consent for our immediate union; you will then see, what effect that has upon his pride."

"But you will then make it too late for him to be humble,—If you resolve on this, my dear Miss Milner, you are undone at once—you may thus hurry yourself into a marriage with a man you do not love, and the misery of your whole future life may be the result.—Or, would you force Mr. Dorriforth (I mean lord Elmwood) to another duel with my lord Frederick?"

"No, call him Dorriforth,—" answered she, with the tears stealing from her eyes, "I thank you for calling him
so;

so; for by that name alone, is he dear to me."

"Nay, Miss Milner, with what rapture did you not receive his love, as lord Elmwood?"

"But under that title he has been barbarous; under the first, he was all friendship and tenderness."

Notwithstanding Miss Milner indulged herself in all those soft bewailings to her friend—before lord Elmwood she maintained a degree of pride and steadiness which surprised even him, who had perhaps ever thought less of her love for him, than any other person. — She now began to fear she had gone too far in discovering her affection, and resolved to make trial of a contrary method. — She determined to retrieve that haughty character which had inspired

spired so many of her admirers with passion, and take the chance of the effect upon this only one, to whom she ever acknowledged a mutual love.—But, although she acted this character well—so well, that every one but Miss Woodley thought her in earnest—yet, with the nicest and most attentive anxiety, did she watch even the slightest circumstance, that might revive her hopes, or confirm her despair. Lord Elmwood's behaviour was calculated to produce the latter—he was cold, polite, and perfectly indifferent.—Yet, whatever his manners now were, they did not remove from her recollection what they had been—she recalled, with delight, the ardour with which he had first declared his passion to her, and the thousand proofs he had since given of its reality.—From the constancy of his disposition,

position, she depended a great deal, that those sentiments were not totally eradicated, and from the extreme desire, which Mr. Sandford now, more than ever, discovered to depreciate her in his patron's esteem—from the now, more than common earnestness, with which he never failed to take Lord Elmwood from her company, whenever he had it in his power, she was led to believe, that while his friend entertained such strong fears of his lordship relapsing into love, she had reason to indulge the strongest hopes that he would.

But the reserve, and even indifference she had so well assumed for a few days, and which might perhaps have effected her designs, she had not the patience to persevere in, without calling levity to their aid.—She visited repeatedly with
 out

190 A SIMPLE STORY.

out saying where, or with whom—
kept later hours than usual—appear-
ed in the highest spirits; sung, laughed,
and never heaved a sigh, but when she
was alone.

Still, Lord Elmwood protracted a re-
solution, he was determined not to
break when once taken.

Miss Woodley was extremely uneasy,
and with cause; she saw her friend was
providing herself with a weight of cares,
she would soon find too much for her
strength to bear—she would have rea-
soned with her, but all her arguments
had long since proved unavailing.—She
strongly wished to speak to Lord Elm-
wood upon the subject, and (unknow-
ing to her) plead her excuse, but he
apprehended Miss Woodley's intention
and

and evidently shunned her. — Mr. Sandford was now the only person to whom she could speak of Miss Milner, and the delight he took to sympathize on her faults, was more sorrow to her friends, than not to speak of her at all. She therefore, sat a friendless widow, waiting with dread for that time, when she, who now scorned her advice, would fly to her in vain for comfort.

Sandford had, however, said one thing to Miss Woodley, which gave her a ray of hope. During their conversation on this subject (not by way of consolation to her, but as a reproach to Lord Elmwood), he one day angrily exclaimed, “And yet, notwithstanding all this provocation, he has not come to the determination to think no more of her—he lingers and hesitates

—I never saw him so weak upon any occasion before."

This was joyful hearing to Miss Woodley; still, she could not but reflect, the longer he was in coming to this determination, the more irrevocable it would be, when once taken; and every moment she passed, she trembled lest that should be the moment, in which lord Elmwood resolved to banish Miss Milner from his heart.

Among the unpardonable indiscretions, she was guilty of during this trial upon the temper of her guardian, was the frequent mention of many gentlemen, who had been her professed admirers, and mentioning them with partiality. Teased, if not tortured by this, lord Elmwood still behaved with a manly evenness of temper, and neither

appeared

provoked on the subject, or insolently careless.—In a single instance, however, this calmness had nearly deserted him.

Entering the drawing-room, one evening, he suddenly started, on seeing lord Frederick Lawley there, in earnest conversation with Miss Milner.

Mrs. Horton and Miss Woodley were both indeed present, and lord Frederick was talking in an audible voice, and upon some indifferent subjects; but with that impressive manner, in which a man never fails to speak to the woman he loves, be the subject what it will.—The moment lord Elmwood started, which was the moment he entered, lord Frederick arose, and said, “I beg your pardon, my lord,” said lord Elmwood, “I protest I did not know you.”

"I ought to entreat your lordship's pardon," returned lord Frederick, "for this intrusion, which an accident alone has occasioned. Miss Milner has been nearly overturned, by the carelessness of a lady's coachman, in whose carriage she was, and therefore suffered me to bring her home in mine."

"I hope you are not hurt." Said lord Elmwood to Miss Milner, but his voice was so much affected, by what he felt, he could scarcely articulate the words.—Not with the apprehension she was hurt, was he thus agitated, for the gaiety of her manners convinced him that could not be the case, nor did he indeed suppose any accident, such as was mentioned, had occurred; but the circumstance of unexpectedly seeing lord Frederick had taken him off his guard, and being totally unprepared, he could not conquer those

those signs of surprise, and the shock it had given him.

Lord Frederick, who had heard nothing of his intended union with his ward, (for it was even kept a secret, at present, from every servant in the house) imputed this discomposure, to the personal resentment his lordship might bear him, in consequence of their duel; for, notwithstanding lord Elmwood had assured the uncle of lord Frederick, (who once waited upon him on the subject of Miss Milner) that all resentment was, on his part, entirely at an end; and that he was willing to consent to the ladies marriage with his nephew, if she herself would concur, yet lord Frederick doubted the sincerity of this, and would still have had the delicacy not to have entered lord Elmwood's house, but, encouraged by

Miss Milner, and emboldened by his love. Personal resentment was then the construction he put upon lord Elmwood's emotion on entering the room, but Miss Milner and Miss Woodley knew his agitation to arise from a far different cause.

After his entrance, lord Frederick did not attempt to resume his seat, but bowing most respectfully to all present, took his leave; while Miss Milner followed him, as far as the door, repeating her thanks and gratitude for his protection.

Lord Elmwood was hurt beyond measure; but he had a second concern, and that was, he had not the power to conceal how much he was affected.—He trembled—when he attempted to speak, he stammered—he perceived his face burning

burning with the blood that had rushed to it from confusion, and thus one confusion gave birth to another, till his state was pitiable.

Miss Minner, with all her assumed gaiety and real insolence, had not, however, the insolence to seem to observe his situation; she had only the confidence to observe it by stealth.—And Mrs. Horton and Miss Woodley, having opportunely begun a discourse upon some trivial occurrences, gave him time to recover himself by degrees—yet, still it was merely by degrees, for the impression this incident had made, was deep, and not easily to be erased.—The entrance of Mr. Sandford, who knew nothing of what had happened, was also some relief, and his lordship and he entered into a conversation, which they

very soon retired into the library to terminate. Miss Milner, taking Miss Woodley with her, went directly to her own apartment, and there exclaimed to her friend, in rapture, "He is mine—he loves me—and he is mine for ever."

Miss Woodley congratulated her upon believing so, but confessed she herself "had her fears."

"What fears?" cried Miss Milner, "don't you perceive he loves me?"

"I do," said Miss Woodley, "but that I always supposed; and, I think, if he loves you now, he has still the good sense to know he has cause to hate you."

"What has good sense to do with love?" returned Miss Milner. "If a lover of mine suffers his understanding to get the better of his affection—"

And

And the same arguments were again going to be repeated, but Miss Woodley interrupted her, by requiring an explanation of her conduct, not in respect to her guardian, but to lord Frederick; whom, at least, she must allow, she was treating with cruelty, if the only purpose of his affection, to stimulate that of lord Elmwood's, was not grievously

“By no means, my dear Miss Woodley,” returned she—“I have, indeed, done with my lord Frederick from this day, and he has certainly given me the proof I wanted of lord Elmwood's love; but then, I did not engage him to this, by the smallest degree of hope.—No, do not suspect me of that, while my heart was another's.—And I assure you, seriously, it was from the circumstance well described, that he came with me home;—yet, I must own, that had I not had this

design upon lord Elmwood's jealousy in
 idea, I would have walked on foot through
 the streets, rather than have suffered his
 rival's civilities. — But he pressed his
 services so violently, and my lady Evan's
 (in whose chariot I was, when the acci-
 dent happened) pressed me so violently
 to accept them, that he cannot expect
 any farther meaning from my acquies-
 cence, than my own convenience."

Miss Woodley was going to reply,
 when she resumed,
 "Nay, if you intend to say I have
 done wrong, still I am not sorry for it,
 while it has given me such convincing
 proofs of lord Elmwood's love. — Did
 you see him? I am afraid you did not
 see how he trembled? — and that manly,
 firm voice faltered, as mine does some
 times — his proud heart was humbled
 too; as mine is some times. — Oh!

A H C

Miss

Miss Woodley, I have been counterfeiting indifference to *him*; I now find all *his* indifference has been counterfeit too, and we not only love, but we love equally."

"Supposing this, all as you hope, I yet think it highly necessary, your guardian should be informed, seriously informed, that it was mere accident, (for, at present, that plea seems but as a subterfuge) which brought lord Frederick hither."

"No, that will be destroying the work so successfully began.—I will not suffer any explanation to take place, but let my lord Elmwood act just as his love shall dictate; and now I have no longer a doubt of its excess, instead of stooping to him, I wait in the certain expectation, of his submission to me."—

—M

C H A P.

202 A SIMPLE STORY.

CHAPTER XL.

IN vain, for three long days, did Miss Milner wait impatiently for this submission; not a sign, not a symptom appeared—nay, lord Elmwood had, since the evening of lord Frederick's visit, (which, at the time it happened, seemed to affect him so exceedingly) become just the same man, he was before the circumstance occurred; except, indeed, something less thoughtful, and now and then cheerful; but without the smallest appearance, that his cheerfulness was affected.—Miss Milner was vexed; she was alarmed; but was ashamed to confess those humiliating sensations, even to Miss Woodley—she assumed, therefore, the vivacity she had

so long assumed, but gave way, when alone, to a still greater degree of melancholy than usual. She no longer applauded her scheme of bringing lord Frederick to the house, and trembled, lest, on some pretence, he should dare to call again. But as these were feelings her pride would not suffer her to disclose to her friend, who would have condoled along with her, their effects were doubly poignant.

Sitting in her dressing-room, one forenoon with Miss Woodley, and burdened with a load of grief, she blushed to acknowledge; while her companion was charged with apprehensions she was as loath to disclose; one of lord Elmwood's valets tapped gently at the door, and delivered a letter to Miss Milner.—By the person who brought it,

it, as well as by the address, she knew it came from lord Elmwood, and laid it down upon her toilet, as if fearful to unfold it.

"What is that?" Said Miss Woodley.

"A letter from my guardian." Replied Miss Milner.

"Good Heaven!" Exclaimed Miss Woodley.

"Nay," returned she, "it is, I have no doubt, to beg my pardon." But her reluctance to open it, plainly evinced she did not think so.

"Do not read it yet." Said Miss Woodley.

"I do not intend," Replied she, trembling extremely.

"Will you dine first?" Said Miss Woodley.

"No,"

No—for not knowing its contents, I shall not know how to conduct myself towards him."

Here a silence ensued—during this silence, Miss Milner took up the letter—looked earnestly at the hand-writing on the out side—at the seal—inspected into its folds—and seemed to wish, by some equivocal method, to guess at the contents, without daring to come at the certain knowledge of them.

Curiosity, at length, got the better of her fears: she opened the letter, and scarce able to hold it while she read, read the following words:

"Madam,

"While I considered you only as my
 "Ward, my friendship for you was un-
 "bounded

"bounded—when I looked upon you
"as a woman formed to grace a fashion-
"able circle, my admiration equalled
"my friendship—and when fate per-
"mitted me to behold you in the ten-
"der light of my betrothed wife, my
"soaring love left those humbler pas-
"sions at a distance.

"That you have still my friendship,
"my admiration, and even my love, I will
"not attempt to deceive either myself
"or you, by disavowing; but still, with
"a firm assurance, I declare, Prudence
"outweighs them all, and I have not,
"from henceforward, a wish to be re-
"garded by you in any other respect,
"than as one who wishes you well."
"—That you ever beheld me in the
"endearing quality of a destined, and
"an affectionate husband, (such as I
"would

" would have proved) my hopes, my
" vanity, own the deception, and am
" humiliated—but I entreat you to spare
" their farther trial, and for a single
" week, do not insult me with the open
" preference of another.—In the space
" of that time, I shall have taken my
" leave of you *for ever*.

" I shall visit Italy, and some other
" countries for a few years, till I be-
" come once more reconciled to the
" change of state I am enjoined; a
" change, I now most fervently wish
" could be entirely dispensed with.

" The occasion of my remaining in
" England a week longer, is to settle
" some necessary affairs, but chiefly
" that of delivering to a friend, a man
" of worth and tenderness, all those
" writings
" bloom

“ writings, which have invested me with
“ the power of my guardianship — he
“ will, the day after my departure (with-
“ out one upbraiding word), resign
“ them to you in my name; and even
“ your father, could he behold the re-
“ signation, would concur in its pro-
“ priety.

“ And now, my dear Miss Milner,
“ let not affected resentment, contempt,
“ or levity, oppose that serenity, which,
“ for the week to come, I wish to
“ enjoy.—By complying with this re-
“ quest, give me to believe, that since
“ you have been under my care, you
“ think I have, at least, faithfully dis-
“ charged some part of my duty.—And
“ wherever I have been inadequate to
“ your wishes, attribute my demerits
“ to some infirmity of mind, rather
“ than

"than to a negligence of your happiness.—Yet, be the cause what it will,
 "since these faults have existed, I acknowledge them, and beg your pardon.
 "don.

"However, time, and succession of
 "objects, may eradicate more tender
 "sentiments; I am sure *never* to lose
 "the liveliest anxiety for your welfare
 "—and with all that solicitude, which
 "I cannot describe, I entreat for your
 "own sake, for mine—when we shall
 "be far asunder—and for the sake of
 "your dead father's memory, *call upon*
 "*every important occasion, your serious*
 "*judgment to direct you.*

"I am, Madam,
 "your sincerest friend,
 "ELMWOOD."

VOL. II. P After

After reading every syllable of this letter, it dropped from Miss Milner's hands; but she uttered not a word.— There was, however, a paleness in her face, a deadness in her eye, and a kind of palsy over her frame, which Miss Woodley, who had seen her in every stage of her uneasiness, never had seen before.

"I do not want to read the letter," said Miss Woodley, "your looks tell me its contents."

"They will then discover to lord Elmwood," replied she, "what I feel; but heaven forbid—that would sink me even lower than I am."

Scarce able to crawl, she rose, and looked in the glass, as if to arrange her features, so as to impose upon him:
alas!

alas! this was of no avail; a serenity of mind, could, alone, effect what she desired.

"You must endeavour," said Miss Woodley, "to feel that disposition, you wish to make appear."

"I will," replied she, "I will feel a proper pride—and a proper scorn of this treatment."

And so desirous was she to attain the appearance of these sentiments, she made the strongest efforts to calm her thoughts, in order to acquire it.

"I have but a few days to remain with him," she said to herself, "and we part for ever—in those few days, it is not only my duty to obey his commands, or rather comply with his request, but it is also my wish to leave upon his mind, an impression, which may not add to the ill opinion he has
P 2 formed

formed of me, but, perhaps, serve to diminish it.—If, in every other instance, my conduct has been blameable, he shall, at least in this, acknowledge its merit.—The fate I have drawn upon myself, he shall find I can be resigned to; and he shall be convinced, that the woman, of whose weakness he has had so many fatal proofs, is yet in possession of some fortitude—fortitude to bid him farewell without discovering one affected, or one real pang, though her death should be the immediate consequence.”

Thus she resolved, and thus she acted.—The severest judge could not have arraigned her conduct from the day she received lord Elmwood's letter, to the day of his departure.—She had, indeed, involuntary weaknesses, but none with which she did not struggle, and

in general her struggles were victorious.

The first time she saw him after the receipt of his letter, was on the evening of the same day—she had a little concert of amateurs in musick, and was, herself, singing and playing when he entered the room; the connoisseurs immediately perceived she lost the tune, but lord Elmwood was no connoisseur in the art, and did not observe it,

They occasionally spoke to each other during the evening, but the subjects were general—and though their manners every time they spoke were perfectly polite, they were not tinctured with the smallest degree of familiarity.—To describe his behaviour exactly, it was the same as his letter, polite, friendly, composed,

and resolved.—Some of the company staid supper, which prevented the embarrassment that must unavoidably have arisen, had the family been by themselves,

The next morning each breakfasted in their separate apartments—more company dined with them, and in the evening, and at supper, lord Elmwood was from home.

Thus all passed on as peaceably as he had requested, and Miss Milner had not betrayed one particle of frailty; when, the third day at dinner, some gentlemen of his acquaintance being at table, one of them said,

“And so, my lord, you absolutely set off on Tuesday morning?”

This

This was Friday.

Sandford and he both replied at the same time, "Yes." And Sandford, but not lord Elmwood, looked at Miss Milner when he spoke.—Her knife and fork gave a sudden spring in her hand, but no other emotion witnessed what she felt.

"Ay, Elmwood," cried another gentleman at table, "you'll bring home, I am afraid, a foreign wife, and that I shan't forgive."

"It is his errand abroad, I make no doubt," Said another visitor.

Before his lordship could return an answer, Sandford cried, "And what objection to a foreigner for a wife? do not crowned heads all marry foreigners? and who happier in the marriage state than some kings?"

Lord Elmwood directed his eyes to the side of the table, opposite to that where Miss Milner sat.

"Nay," (answered one of the guests, who was a country gentleman) "what do you say, ladies—do you think my lord ought to go out of his own nation for a wife?" And he looked at Miss Milner, for the reply.

Miss Woodley, uneasy at her friend's being thus forced to give an opinion upon so delicate a subject, endeavoured to satisfy the gentleman, by answering to the question herself: "Whoever my lord Elmwood marries, Sir," said Miss Woodley, "he, no doubt, will be happy."

"But what say you, young lady?" Asked the gentleman, still keeping his eyes on Miss Milner.

"That whoever his lordship marries, he *deserves* to be happy." Returned she, with the utmost command of her voice and looks; for Miss Woodley,
by

by replying first, had given her time to collect herself.

The colour flew to lord Elmwood's face, as she delivered this short sentence; and Miss Woodley flattered herself, she saw a tear start in his eye.

Miss Milner did not look that way.

In an instant his lordship found means to change the subject, but that of his journey, still employed the conversation; and what horses, servants, and carriage he took with him, was minutely asked, and so accurately answered either by himself or by Mr. Sandford, that Miss Milner, although she had beheld her doom before, till now had received no circumstantial account of it—and as circumstances add to, or diminish all we feel, hearing these things told, increased the bitterness of their truth.

Soon

Soon after dinner, the ladies retired, and from that time, though Miss Milner's behaviour still continued the same, yet her looks and her voice were totally altered—for the world, she could not have looked cheerfully; for the world, she could not have spoken with a sprightly accent; she frequently began in one, but not three words had she uttered, before her tones sunk into the flattest dejection.—Not only her colour, but her features became changed; her eyes lost their brilliancy, her lips seemed to hang without the power of motion, her head drooped, and her dress was wholly neglected.—Conscious of this distressing appearance, and conscious of the weakness from whence it arose, it was her desire to hide herself from the only object she could have wished

to have charmed. — Accordingly, she sat alone, or with Miss Woodley in her own apartment, as much as was consistent with that civility her guardian had requested, and which forbade her from totally absenting herself,

Miss Woodley felt so acutely the torments of her friend, that had not her reason told her the inflexible mind of lord Elmwood was fixed beyond her power to shake, she had cast herself at his feet, and implored the return of his affection and tenderness as the only means to save his once beloved ward from an untimely grave. But her understanding — her knowledge of lord Elmwood's firm and immoveable temper, and all his grievous provocations — her knowledge of his word, long since
given

given to Sandford, "That if once resolved, he would not recall his resolution."—The certainty of the many plans that had been arranged for his travels, all agreed to convince her, that by any interference, she only exposed Miss Milner's tenderest love and delicacy to a contemptuous rejection.

If the conversation did not every day turn upon the subject of lord Elmwood's departure—a conversation he evidently avoided himself—yet every day some new preparation for his journey, struck the ear or the eye of Miss Milner—and had she beheld a frightful spectre, she could not have shuddered with more horror, than when she unexpectedly passed his large trunks in the hall, nailed and corded, ready to be sent off to meet him at Venice.—At the sight, she flew from

from the company that happened to be along with her, and stole to the first lonely corner of the house to conceal her tears—she reclined her head upon her hands, and bedewed them with the sudden anguish that had overcome her.—She heard a footstep advancing towards the spot where she hoped to have been concealed; she lifted up her eyes, and beheld lord Elmwood.—Pride was the first emotion his presence inspired—pride, which arose from the humility into which she was plunged.

She instantly stifled her tears, and looked at him earnestly, as if to imply, “What now, my lord?”

He only answered with a bow, which expressed these words alone: “I beg your pardon.” And immediately withdrew.

Thus

Thus each understood the other's language, without either uttering a word.

The just construction, which she put upon his looks and behaviour upon this occasion, kept up her spirits for some little time; and she blessed heaven, repeatedly, for the singular favour of shewing to her, clearly, by this accident, his negligence of her sorrows, his total indifference.

The next day was the eve of that, on which he was to depart—and the one on which she was to bid adieu to Dorriforth, to her guardian, to lord Elmwood; to all her hopes at once.

The moment she awoke on Monday morning, the recollection, that this was, perhaps,

perhaps, the last day she was ever again to see him, softened all the resentment his yesterday's conduct had given birth to, and forgetting his austerity, and all she once termed, cruelties; she now only remembered his friendship, his anxious tenderness, and his love. — She was impatient to behold him, and promised to herself, for this last day, to neglect no one opportunity of being with him. For that purpose she did not breakfast in her own room, as she had done for several mornings before, but went into the breakfast-room, where all the family generally met. — She was rejoiced on hearing his voice as she opened the door, yet the sound made her tremble so much, she could scarcely totter to the table.

Miss

Miss Woodley looked at her as she entered, and was never so shocked at seeing her; for never had she yet seen her look so ill.—As she approached, she made an inclination of her head to Mrs. Horton, and then to her guardian, as was her custom, when she first saw them in a morning—his lordship looked in her face as he bowed, then turned his eyes upon the fire place, rubbed his forehead, and began talking with Mr. Sandford.

Sandford, during breakfast, by accident, cast his eyes upon Miss Milner; his attention was caught by her deathly countenance, and he looked earnestly.—He then turned to lord Elmwood to see if he was observing her appearance—he was not—and so much were her thoughts

thoughts engaged on him alone, she did not once perceive Sandford gazing at her.

Mrs. Horton after a little while observed, "It was a beautiful morning."

Lord Elmwood said, "He thought he heard it rain in the night."

Sandford cried, "For his part he slept too well to know." And then (unasked) held a plate with biscuits to Miss Milner—it was the first civility he had ever in his life offered her; she smiled at the whimsicality of the circumstance, but took one in return for his attention.—He looked grave beyond his usual gravity, and yet not with his usual ill temper. She did not eat what she had so politely taken, but laid it down soon after.

Lord Elmwood was the first who rose from breakfast, and did not return to dinner.

At dinner, Mrs. Horton said, "She hoped his lordship would, however, favour them with his company at supper."

To which Sandford replied, "No doubt, for you will hardly any of you see him in the morning; as we shall be off by six, or soon after."

Sandford was not going abroad with lord Elmwood, but was to go with him as far as Dover.

These words of his—"not see lord Elmwood in the morning"—[never again to see him after this evening,] were like the knell of death to Miss Milner.—She felt the symptoms of fainting, and eagerly snatched a glass of wine, which the ser-

vant was holding to Sandford, (who had called for wine) and drank a part of it.— As she returned the glass to the servant, she began to apologize to Mr. Sandford for her seeming rudeness, but before she could utter what she meant, he said, good-naturedly, “Never mind—you are very welcome—I am glad you took it.”—She looked at him to observe, whether he had really spoken kindly, or ironically; but before his countenance could satisfy her, her thoughts were away from that trivial circumstance, and again fixed upon lord Elmwood.

The moments seemed tedious till he came home to supper, and yet, when she reflected for how short a time the rest of the evening would continue, she wished to defer the hour of his return, for months.—At ten o’clock he arrived,

and at half after ten the family, without any visitor, met at supper.

Miss Milner had considered, that the period for her to counterfeit appearances, was diminished now to a very short one; and she rigourously enjoined herself not to shrink from that little which remained.—The certain end, that would be so soon put to this painful deception, encouraged her to struggle through it, with redoubled zeal; and this was but necessary, as her weakness increased.—She therefore listened, she talked, and even smiled with the rest of the company, nor did their vivacity seem to arise from a much less compulsive source than her own.

It was past twelve, when lord Elmwood looked at his watch, and rising

from his seat, went up to Mrs. Horton, and taking her hand, said, "Till I see you again, madam, I sincerely wish you every happiness."

Miss Milner fixed her eyes upon the table before her.

"My lord," replied Mrs. Horton, "I sincerely wish you health and happiness likewise."

He then went to Miss Woodley, and taking her hand, repeated much the same, as he had said to Mrs. Horton.

Miss Milner now trembled beyond all power of concealment.

"My lord," replied Miss Woodley, a good deal affected, "I sincerely hope my prayers for your happiness may be heard."

She and Mrs. Horton were both standing as well as his lordship; but

Q3

Miss

Miss Milner kept her seat, till his eye was turned upon her, and he moved slowly towards her; she then rose—and every one who was present attentive to what he would now say, and how she would receive what he said, cast their eyes upon them, and listened with impatience.—They were all disappointed—he did not utter a syllable.—Yet he took her hand, and held it closely between his.—He then bowed most respectfully, and left her.

No, “I wish you well;—I wish you health and happiness.” No “Prayers for blessings on her.”—Not even the word “farewell,” escaped his lips—perhaps, to have attempted any of these, might have choked his utterance.

She had behaved with fortitude the whole evening, and she continued to do

do so, till the moment he turned away from her. — Her eyes then overflowed with tears, and in the agony of her mind, not knowing what she did, she laid her cold hand upon the person next to her — it happened to be Sandford; but not observing it was him, she grasped his hand with violence — yet he did not snatch it away, nor look at her with his wonted severity. — And thus she stood, silent and motionless, while his lordship lighted a candle, he took from the side-board, bowed once more to all the company, and retired.

Sandford had still Miss Milner's hand fixed upon his, and when the door was shut after lord Elmwood, he turned his head to look in her face, and turned it with some marks of apprehension for the grief he might find there. — She

struggled to overcome that grief, and after a heavy sigh, sat down, as if resigned to the fate to which she was decreed.

Instead of following lord Elmwood, as usual, Sandford poured out a glass of wine, and drank it.—A general silence ensued for near three minutes.—At last turning himself round on his seat, towards Miss Milner, who sat like a statue of despair at his side, “Will you breakfast with us to-morrow?” Said he.

She made no answer.

“We shan’t breakfast before half after six,” continued he, “I dare say; and if you can rise so early—why do?”

“Miss Milner,” said Miss Woodley, (for she caught, eagerly, at the hope of her passing this night in less unhappiness than she had foreboded) “pray
rise

rise at that hour to breakfast; Mr. Sand-
would not invite you, if he thought it
would displease his lordship."

"Not I." Replied Sandford, chur-
kily.

"Then desire her woman to call
her." Said Mrs. Horton to Miss Wood-
ley.

"Nay, she will be awake, I have no
doubt." Returned her niece.

"No;" replied Miss Milner, "since
lord Elmwood has thought proper to
take his leave of me, without even
speaking a word; by my own design,
never will I see him again." And here
a flood of tears burst forth, as if her
heart burst at the same time.

"Why did not *you* speak to *him*?"
cried Sandford — "pray did you bid
him farewell? — and I don't see why
one

One is not so much to be blamed, in that respect, as the other." and she said,

"I was too weak to say, I wished him happy;" cried Miss Milner, "but heaven is my witness, I do wish him so from my soul."

"And do you imagine, he does not wish you so too?" cried Sandford.—

"You should judge him by your own heart; and what you feel for him, imagine he feels for you, my dear."

Though "my dear" is a trivial phrase, yet from certain people, and upon certain occasions, it is a phrase of infinite comfort and assurance.—Mr. Sandford seldom said "my dear" to any one; to Miss Milner never, and upon this occasion, and from him, it was an expression most precious.

one

4

She

CHAP

She turned to him with a look of gratitude; but as she only looked, and did not speak, he rose up, and soon after said, with a friendly tone he had seldom spoken with in her presence, "I sincerely wish you a good night."

As soon as he was gone, Miss Milner exclaimed, "However my fate may have been precipitated by the unkindness of Mr. Sandford, yet, for that particle of concern he has shown for me this night, I will always be grateful to him."

"Ay," cried Mrs. Horton, "good Mr. Sandford may show his kindness now, without any danger from its consequences.—Now his lordship is going away for ever, he is not afraid of your seeing him once again." And she thought she praised him by this suggestion.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Miss Milner retired to her bed-chamber, Miss Woodley went with her, nor would leave her the whole night—but in vain did she persuade her to go to rest, she absolutely refused; and declared she would never, from that hour, indulge the smallest repose.—“The part I undertook to perform,” cried she, “is over; I will now, for my whole life, appear in my own character, and give a loose to the anguish I endure.”

As day light showed itself, “And yet I might see him once again,” said she. “I might see him within these two hours, if I pleased, for Mr. Sandford invited me.”

“If

"If you think, my dear Miss Milner," said Miss Woodley, "that a second parting from lord Elmwood, would but give you a second agony, in the name of heaven do not see him any more—but, if you think your mind would be easier, were you to bid each other adieu in a more direct manner than you did last night, let us go down and breakfast with him.—I'll go before, to prepare him for your reception—you shall not unexpectedly surprise him—and I will let him know, it is by Mr. Sandford's invitation you are coming."

She listened with a smile to this proposal, yet objected to the indelicacy of her wishing to see him, after he had taken his leave—but as Miss Woodley, nevertheless, perceived she was inclined to infringe this delicacy, of which she had so proper a sense, she easily persuaded

founded her, it was impossible for the most suspicious person (and Lord Elmwood was far from such a character) to suppose, that by paying him a visit at that period of time, could be with the most distant idea of regaining his heart, or of altering one resolution he had taken.

In this opinion, Miss Milner acquiesced, yet she had not the courage to come to the determination she would go.

Day light now no longer peeped, but stared broad upon them.—Miss Milner went to the looking-glass, breathed upon her hands and rubbed them on her eyes; put some powder into her hair; yet said, after all, “I dare not see him again!”

“You may do as you please,” said Miss Woodley, “but I will. I that
have

have lived for so many years under the same roof with him, and on the most friendly terms, and he going away, perhaps for these ten years, perhaps for ever; I should think it a disrespect not to see him to the last moment of his remaining in the house."

"Then do you go," said Miss Milner, eagerly, "and if he should ask for me, I will gladly come, you know; but if he does not ask for me, I will not—and pray do not deceive me."

Miss Woodley gave her her word not to deceive her; and soon after, as they heard the servants pass about the house, and the clock had struck six, Miss Woodley went to the breakfast-room.

She found lord Elmwood there in his travelling dress, standing pensively by the fire place—and, as he did not dream of seeing

Seeing her, he started when she entered, and with an appearance of alarm said, "Dear Miss Woodley, what's the matter?" — She replied, "Nothing, my lord; but I could not be satisfied without seeing your lordship once again, while I had it in my power."

"I thank you." He returned with a sigh, and the heaviest and most intelligent sigh, she ever heard him condescend to give.—She imagined, also, he looked as if he wished to ask how Miss Milner did; but would not allow himself the indulgence.—She was half inclined to mention her to him, and debating in her mind whether she should or not, Mr. Sandford came into the room; saying, as he entered,

"For heaven's sake, my lord, where did you sleep last night?"

"Why,

"Why do you ask?" Said his lordship.

"Because," replied Sandford, "I went into your bed-chamber but now, and I found your bed made.—You have not slept there to-night."

"I have slept no where;" answered his lordship, "I could not sleep—and having some papers to look over, and to rise early, I thought I might as well not go to bed at all."

Miss Woodley was pleased at the frank manner in which he made this confession, and could not resist the strong impulse to say, "You have done just then, my lord, like Miss Milner, for she has not been in bed the whole night."

Miss Woodley spoke this in a negligent manner, and yet, lord Elmwood echoed back the words with solici-

tude and tenderness, "Has not Miss Milner been in bed the whole night?"

"If she is up, why does not she come and take some coffee?" Said Sandford, as he began to pour it out.

"If she thought it would be agreeable," returned Miss Woodley, "I dare say she would." And she looked at Lord Elmwood while she spoke, though she did not absolutely address him; but he made no reply.

"Agreeable!" returned Sandford, angrily, "Has she then a quarrel with any body here? or does she suppose any body here bears enmity to *her*?—Is she not in peace and charity?"

"Yes," replied Miss Woodley, "that I am sure she is."

"Then bring her hither," (said he) directly.—Would she have the wickedness

edness to imagine we are not all friends with her?"

Miss Woodley left the room, and found Miss Milner almost in despair, lest she should hear lord Elmwood's carriage drive off before her friend's return.

"Did he send for me?" were the words she uttered as soon as she saw her.

"Mr. Sandford did, in his presence," returned Miss Woodley, "and you may go with the utmost decorum, or I would not tell you so."

She required no protestations of this, but readily followed her beloved adviser, whose kindness never appeared in half the amiable light as at that moment.

On entering the room, through all the dead white of her present complex-

ion, she blushed to a crimson.—Lord Elmwood rose from his seat, and brought a chair for her to sit down.

Sandford looked at her inquisitively, then sipped his tea, and said, “He never made tea to his own liking.”

Miss Milner took a cup, but had scarce strength to hold it.

It seemed but a very short time they were at breakfast, when the carriage, that was to take his lordship away, drove to the door.—Miss Milner started at the sound; so did he; but she had nearly dropped her cup and saucer: on which Sandford took them out of her hand, saying,

“Perhaps you had rather have coffee?”

Her lips moved, but he could not hear what she said.

A ser-

A servant came in, and told lord Elmwood, "The carriage was at the door."

He replied, "Very well." But though he had breakfasted, he did not attempt to move.

At last, rising briskly from his seat, as if it was necessary to go in haste, when he did go; he took up his hat, which he had brought with him into the room, and was turning to Miss Woodley to take his leave, when Sandford cried, "My lord, you are in a great hurry."—And then, as if he wished to give poor Miss Milner every moment he could, added, (looking about) "I don't know where I have laid my gloves."

His lordship, after repeating to Miss Woodley his last night's farewell, now

R 3 went

went up to Miss Milner, and taking one of her hands, again held it between his, but still without speaking—while she, unable to suppress her tears, as heretofore, suffered them to fall in torrents.

“What is all this?” Cried Sandford, going up to them in anger.

They neither of them replied, or changed their situation.

“Seperate this moment.” — Cried Sandford — “Or resolve never to be separated but by death.”

The commanding, and awful manner in which he spoke this sentence, made them both turn to him in amazement! and almost petrified with the sensation his words had caused.

He left them for a moment, and going to a small book-case in one corner of the room, took out of it a book,

and

and returning with it in his hand, said,

"Lord Elmwood, do you love this woman?"

"More than my life." Replied his lordship, with the most heartfelt accents.

He then turned to Miss Milner—

"Can you say the same by him?"

She spread her hands over her eyes, and cried, "Oh, heavens!"

"I believe you *can* say so," returned Sandford, "and in the name of God, and your own happiness, since this is the case, let me put it out of your power to part."

Lord Elmwood gazed at him with wonder! and yet, as if enraptured by the sudden appearance of a change in his prospects.

She, sighed with a trembling kind of extacy; while Sandford, with all the pomp and dignity of a clergyman in his official character, delivered these words:

“My lord, while I thought my counsel might save you from the worst of misfortunes, conjugal strife, I importuned you hourly; and set forth your danger in the light it appeared to me.—But though old, and a priest, I can submit to think I have been in an error; and I now firmly believe, it is for the welfare of you both, to become man and wife.—My lord, take this woman’s marriage vows; you can ask no fairer promises of her reform; she can give you none half so sacred, half so binding; and I see by her looks she will mean to keep them.—And my dear,” continued he, addressing himself to her, “act but
under

under the dominion of those vows, to a husband of sense and virtue, like him, and you will be all that I, himself, or even heaven can desire.—Now then, lord Elmwood, this moment give her up for ever; or this moment constrain her by such ties from offending you, she shall not *dare* to violate.”

Lord Elmwood struck his forehead in doubt and agitation; but still holding her hand, he cried, “I cannot part from her.”——Then feeling this reply as equivocal, he fell upon his knees, and cried, “Will you pardon my hesitation?—and will you, in marriage, show me that tender love you have not shown me yet?—will you, in possessing all my affections, bear with all my infirmities?”

She

She raised him from her feet, and by the expression of her face, the tears with which she bathed his hands, gave him confidence.

He turned to Sandford—then placing her by his own side, as the form of matrimony requires, gave this as a sign for Sandford to begin the ceremony.—On which, he opened his book, and—married them.

While with a countenance—manner—and voice, so serious, and so fervent, did he perform these rites, that the idea of jest, or even of lightness, was far from the mind of every one present.

Miss Milner, covered with shame, sunk on the bosom of Miss Woodley.

When the ring was wanting, lord Elmwood supplied it with one from his own hand, but throughout all the rest of
the

the ceremony, appeared lost in zealous devotion to heaven. — Yet, no sooner was it finished; than his thoughts seemed to descend to this world. — He embraced his bride with all the transport of the fondest, happiest bridegroom, and in raptures called her by the endearing name of, “wife.”

“But still, my lord,” cried Sandford, “you are only married by your own church and conscience, not by your wife’s; or by the law of the land; and let me advise you not to defer that marriage long, lest in the time you disagree, and she yet refuse to become your legal spouse.”

“I think there is danger,” returned his lordship, “and therefore our second marriage must take place to-morrow.”

To

To this the ladies objected, and it was left to Sandford to fix their second wedding-day, as he had done their first.—He, after consideration, gave four days interval.

Miss Woodley then recollected (for every one else had forgot it) that the carriage was still at the door to convey lord Elmwood abroad.—It was of course dismissed—and one of those great incidents of delight Miss Milner that morning tasted, was to look out of the window, and see this very carriage drive from the door unoccupied.

Never was there a more rapid change from despair to happiness—to happiness most supreme—than was that, which Miss Milner, and lord Elmwood experienced within one single hour.

The

The few days that intervened between this and their legal marriage, were passed in the delightful care of preparing for that happy day — yet, with all its delights inferior to the first; when every joy was doubled by the expected sorrow.

Nevertheless, on that first wedding-day, that joyful day, which restored her lost lover to her hopes again; even on that *very* day, after the sacred ceremony was over, Miss Milner—(with all the fears, the tremors, the superstition of her sex)—felt an excruciating shock; when, looking on the ring lord Elmwood had put upon her finger, in haste, when he married her, she perceived it was a—
MOURNING RING.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



ERRATA to the SECOND VOLUME.

- Page 1, for ever seen, read *had ever seen*.
7, for for a moment, read *instantly*.
30, for secure, read *obtain*.
36, for what, (2d line from the top) read *such as*.
38, for bid, (last line) read *had*.
41, for Run, (tenth line from the top) read *Ran*.
130, after you may call, (fifth line from the bottom) insert *it*.
155, for there presentative, read *the representative*.
166, for thoughts, read *replies*.
195, for lord Elmwood's, (last line) read *his*.
200, for Evans's, read *Evans*.
218, for had for uttered, read *could be uttered*.
291, for lord Elmwood, read *his lordship*.
224, 2d line from the top, after *so*, insert *much*.

